Chronicle

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UNHCR at 40

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A foreseeable mystery

Societies carry within them . . . an explosive charge: that of the unforeseeable, Mexican poet Octavio Paz once wrote. History is propelled forward, often in cruel and violent ways, both by those mysterious forces Paz wrote about and by perfectly foreseeable explosions which human society has not yet learned to harness. The tragic exodus of 1.5 million Iraqis, many of them Kurds, towards Iran and Turkey—among the largest and fastest refugee movements since the end of the Second World War—partakes of both sides of this paradox. The challenge to the UN and the world is not only to alleviate their suffering, but to learn from it the necessary political and human lessons. Such understanding might help shape things to come, as we move on to the twenty-first century, struggling still with the foreseeable mystery of human disaster. The cover photo of Kurdish refugees returning home to Iraq was taken in June 1991 by UN staff photographer John Isaac in Gilan-E-Gharb, an Iranian border town.

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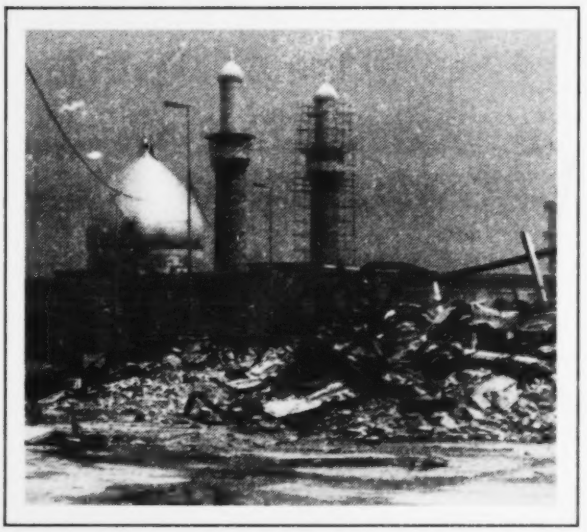

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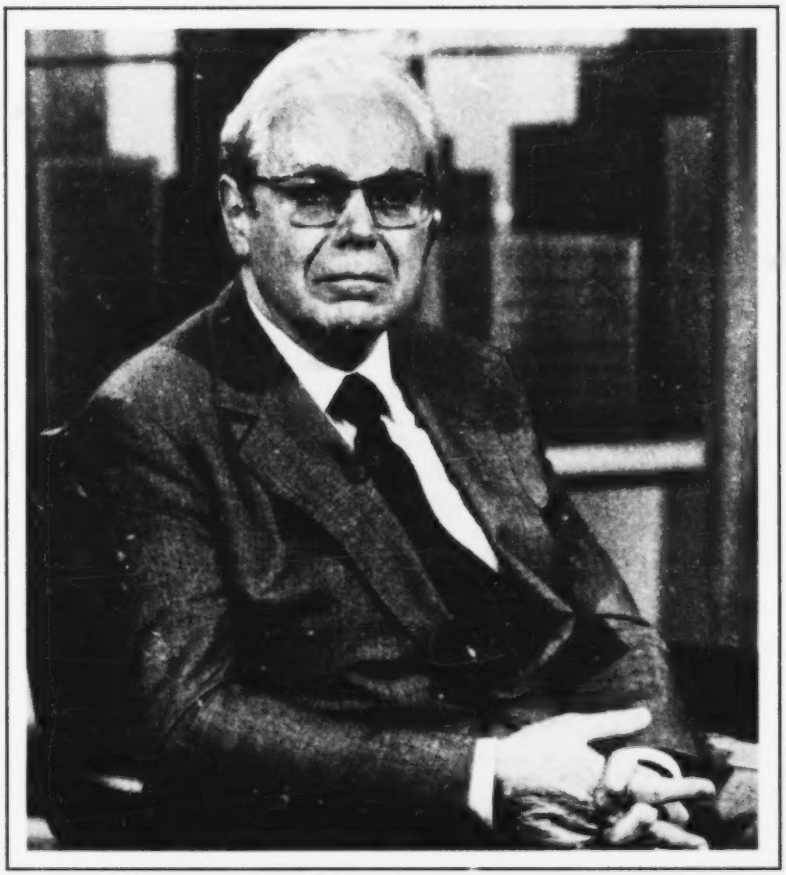


UN Photo 157640/J. Isaac

Excerpts from statements by UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar made between 1 April and 30 June 1991

A basic tool . . .

The heart and core of international law is the precept that nation-States must learn to live in peace with one another according to established rules if the human community is to lead an orderly existence. The present-day world of growing interdependence has given new meaning to this precept and vastly amplified its scope.

The code of conduct that international law prescribes should not be regarded as simply a system of prohibitions and restraints. On the contrary, it is positive and functional, furnishing a basic tool of progress and co-operation. . . .

We can thus see the emergence of some of the basic requirements for international law to become more effective in governing international relations. First, it must not stagnate but must keep pace with change in the conditions of international life. Second, it must evoke a shared understanding and it must be seen to derive from the morality of international behaviour. Third, it must not be applied selectively.

At the University of Bordeaux, France, 22 April

A time of hope . . .

We are at a time which offers us, suddenly and remarkably, the hope and opportunity of great progress towards the kind of world the Charter describes. We must seize the moment before the forces and energy released by old rigidities can harden into new ones.

Concluding the White House visit, Washington, D.C., 9 May

To benefit all . . .

The environment, in all its beauty and complexity, is a global resource that must be managed effectively for the benefit of all peoples, present and future. . . . I therefore attach great importance to the ongoing negotiation of a framework convention on climate change, and look forward to wide agreement on an effective international instrument in time for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

In observance of World Environment Day, New York, 5 June

A unique compact . . .

Later this year the General Assembly will be carrying out a review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. When it was adopted in 1986, the Programme raised great expectations since it was the first time that the African countries themselves had developed a comprehensive programme of priorities for the economic development and progress of the continent as a part of a unique compact between Africa and the international community to support these efforts. This will be a timely opportunity for the African countries to review their own efforts as well as their priorities and, in a more focused manner, the nature and quality of international support that would be required to help achieve their objectives. It is important that the new arrangements that we agreed upon later this year provide for sustained economic growth and development for the countries of Africa.

At the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, Abuja, Nigeria, 3 June

North-West-South relations . . .

The success of high-precision military technology in the recent conflict will no doubt arouse the interest of many countries. The military applications of science and technology have attracted the attention of the United Nations in the past two years. It is essential to find a way of restricting the transfer of advanced technology for military purposes and protecting the legitimate interests of developing countries that wish to expand their scientific and technological base. This is a central aspect of the balance in North-South relations—which no doubt should from now on be renamed North-West-South relations, taking Europe as the centre.

Before the European Parliament, Strasbourg, France, 17 April

Shared dangers . . .

The nuclear accident at Chernobyl is without precedent in history. Its insidious effects have not been limited to one spot, one area or one country; its contamination has travelled over thousands of miles, crossing national borders and reaching remote corners of the planet. Although five years have elapsed since the catastrophe occurred, it has not yet been possible to assess the full nature and extent of its harmful effects.

And yet, by the very nature of its global impact, the accident also has a significant and educative effect. It has helped to bring us closer together by raising our consciousness of our shared dangers. It has aroused feelings in all of us of deep concern, solidarity and compassion; it has helped to break through barriers between East and West and North and South; it has taught us that we must learn from each other's experience if we want to survive.

Commemorating the fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, New York, 26 April

To unmask oppression . . .

We must recognize that there is a palpable change in the attitude of the world's peoples towards the belief that abuse and oppression can no longer be shielded from international scrutiny because of claims of national sovereignty. This shift in international standards requires the attention of Governments, as well as academic and professional groups, in order to bring international law more into line with an evolving morality that increasingly decries the massive and deliberate violation of human rights.

To the Forum for Security Policy at Saint Gallen University, Switzerland, 15 June

'Unique operation'

Security Council establishes UN mission for Western Sahara referendum

The Security Council on 29 April formally established the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara to implement the Secretary-General's plan for a settlement of the question of Western Sahara. The Mission will be known by its French acronym, MINURSO.

The plan provides for UN supervision of a cease-fire between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (POLISARIO). It also details how a referendum on the future of Western Sahara should be organized. The people of the Territory will choose between independence and integration with Morocco.

MINURSO will involve approximately 900 international civilian personnel, 300 police officers and a military component with a strength of about 1,695.

On 17 May, the General Assembly approved, in principle, an allocation of some $180 million to finance the Mission for the nine-month period approved by the Council. Member States were asked for voluntary contributions to finance a repatriation programme for Western Saharans, to be conducted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Johannes Manz, the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Western Sahara, called the new operation "unique", one of the most challenging the UN had ever undertaken. This was the first time, he said, the Organization would have full responsibility for such a referendum.

In unanimously adopting resolution 690 (1991), the Council approved a 19 April report of the Secretary-General *(S/22464 and Corr.1)*, which amplified a previous report *(S/21360)* outlining his plan to implement the settlement proposals as accepted by Morocco and POLISARIO on 30 August 1988.

The Council also decided that a transitional period would begin no later than 16 weeks after Assembly approval of the MINURSO budget—around mid-September. The referendum itself was expected to be held towards the end of January 1992.

The Mission's operational area comprises Western Sahara—more than 250,000 square kilometres in size—and locations to be designated in neighbouring countries, such as the Tindouf refugee camps, where numbers of Western Saharans are known to live.

'Abiding support'

In welcoming resolution 690, Algeria said the plan had its "absolute and abiding support". A decisive stage had been reached "on the path towards a peaceful, just and final settlement of the question of Western Sahara", it stated. Algeria would ensure that the referendum process took place in an atmosphere of calm, confidence and respect for the peace plan. The settlement would promote peace and stability in the region.

Mauritania said the measures agreed on provided an opportunity

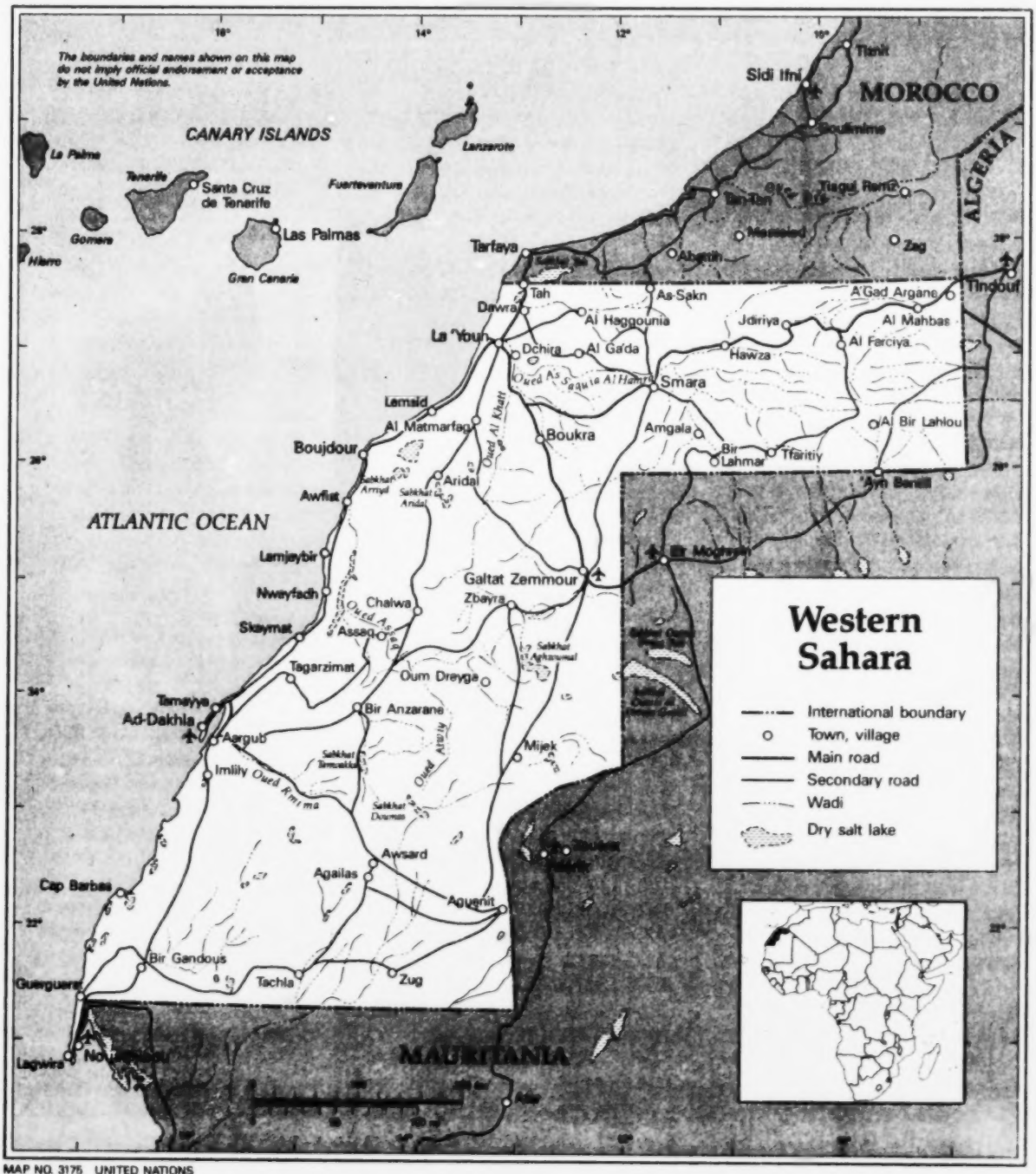
UN Photo 177753/J. Isaac

Special Representative Manz

for a just and lasting settlement of the "fratricidal conflict". It was prepared to cooperate with the Secretary-General for the accomplishment of his mission.

On 25 May, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar had a tête-à-tête meeting with King Hassan II of Morocco in Rabat, exchanging views, among other things, on the UN operation in Western Sahara.

On 26 May, the Secretary-General met in Oran, Algeria, with Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid. On 31 May, he met in Lisbon with the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on implementing the plan for a settlement of the question of Western Sahara.



MAP NO. 3175 UNITED NATIONS
MARCH 1990

The UN, in cooperation with OAU, would be taking on "a complex operation involving responsibilities unequalled in similar operations in the past", Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar told the Council on 24 April during informal consultations.

The operation's success would further affirm the right of peoples to self-determination and would contribute to the maintenance of peace—two fundamental UN Charter objectives.

'Balanced and equitable'

In his 19 April report, the Secretary-General said that the plan resulted from a long and exhaustive search for the most equitable, effective and economical ways to implement the settlement proposals accepted by the parties in August 1988. However, it could not meet all the concerns of the two parties and compromises had therefore had to be sought.

Four essential conditions must be met for a successful outcome and for MINURSO to perform effectively and with complete impartiality, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar stressed. These were: full Security Council support; full cooperation of the two parties, particularly with regard to the comprehensive cessation of all hostile acts; cooperation and support of neighbouring countries; and availability of the necessary financial resources in a full and timely manner.

MINURSO, the Secretary-General assured the Council, would act with complete impartiality and proceed on the assumption that the two parties would cooperate with the Special Representative.

The Mission would require freedom of movement and communication and other facilities necessary in performing its tasks. Its personnel must be accorded all relevant privileges and immunities provided for in the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the UN, as well as those specially required for the proposed operation.

The Mission would also rely on the continued cooperation and understanding of the two neighbouring States—Algeria and Mauritania—which had already undertaken to do their utmost to ensure that transitional arrangements and the results of the referendum were respected, and to cooperate in various ways with MINURSO.

UN Photo 130174/Y Nagata

In the desert of Western Sahara.

'D-Day'

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said the transitional period would last for 20 weeks, beginning with the coming into effect of the cease-fire on "D-Day". It would end with the proclamation of the referendum's results. MINURSO would continue to discharge its responsibilities for up to 26 weeks from "D-Day".

A UN official said on 28 June that Special Representative Manz would be taking up his duties on 6 September, the date accepted by both Morocco and POLISARIO for the cease-fire, in response to the Secretary-General's proposal.

The Secretary-General said he had accepted Morocco's undertaking to reduce its troops in Western Sahara to a level not exceeding 65,000, within 11 weeks from the coming into effect of the cease-fire.

All remaining Moroccan troops would be located in static or defensive positions along the sand wall (erected by Morocco in Western Sahara), with certain exceptions. They would be monitored by MINURSO's military observers, who would conduct extensive patrols by land and air to ensure observance of the cease-fire and the confinement of the Moroccan troops to designated locations. They would also monitor the custody of certain arms and ammunition.

The Special Representative is to designate the locations to which POLISARIO troops would be confined—with their arms, ammunition and military equipment—with effect from the coming into force of the cease-fire. The troops would be monitored by MINURSO military observers, who would be deployed at each designated location.

The Special Representative would take steps with the two parties to ensure the release of all Western Saharan political prisoners or detainees before the beginning of the referendum campaign and, to that end, an amnesty was envisaged

as the first stage. In that work, he would be assisted by an independent jurist appointed by the Secretary-General. Any differences concerning the release of political prisoners or detainees would be settled in a manner satisfactory to the Special Representative.

The settlement proposals also provide for the exchange of prisoners of war to take place under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Identifying voters

A central element in the settlement proposals is the identification and registration of all Western Saharans eligible to vote in the referendum, the Secretary-General stated. An Identification Commission would perform that task during the transitional period. Certain tasks must be completed outside and inside Western Sahara before the cease-fire comes into effect, it was stated.

All Western Saharans, to whom the 1974 census undertaken by the Spanish authorities related and who were aged 18 years or over, would have the right to vote, whether they were currently present in Western Sahara or living outside as refugees or for other reasons.

The 1974 census would be updated by removing from the lists the names of persons who had died and considering applications from those who claimed they were Western Saharans omitted from the census. The Commission would also publish instructions on how they could apply for inclusion in the list.

The Commission, assisted by the tribal chiefs and in the presence of observers from OAU and the parties, would meet in New York or Geneva to review such applications under the supervision of the Special Representative.

Prior to "D-Day", a consolidated list of names of persons eligible to vote would be published in Western Sahara and other places where Western Saharans were known to be living.

By "D-Day", the Identification Commission is to be fully established in the mission area, assisted by field offices established at principal population centres, as well as by static and mobile teams.

At that second stage of its work, the Commission, assisted by tribal chiefs, would identify and issue registration cards to persons named on the published list of voters.

It would also organize procedures for appeals against non-inclusion of names on the list or against decisions regarding identification and issuance of registration cards. At designated locations, the Commission would also identify and register all POLISARIO troops eligible to vote, as well as any eligible Western Saharans in the Moroccan forces.

Organizing the vote

The Referendum Commission is to assist the Special Representative in all aspects of the organization and conduct of the referendum, advising him on measures to ensure that the referendum is free and fair, without military or administrative constraints, and that there is no intimidation or interference in the voting process. The two parties and OAU representatives would be official observers in that work.

The Referendum Commission would prepare rules and instructions establishing a legal framework within which the UN would conduct the referendum.

A code of conduct and behaviour for both parties during the referendum campaign and the referendum itself is to be established by the Special Representative. It would ensure that freedom of political campaigning carries with it the responsibility for respecting the free expression of political ideas without threat or fear of intimidation.

The Special Representative will determine the starting date of the referendum campaign, when he is satisfied that all Western Saharans would be able to participate equally and without administrative or military contraint in the campaign.

An adequate number of polling stations is to be established throughout the Territory so that all eligible voters could participate. Voting would take place only in Western Sahara.

Repatriation

An essential element of the process is the repatriation of Western Saharans identified as being eligible to vote and who wish to return to the Territory to participate in the referendum.

The repatriation programme would be implemented by UNHCR as an integral part of the MINURSO operation. Repatriation is to begin immediately after the Commission's work is completed.

Security would be provided by MINURSO's military unit. A general and complete amnesty for all returnees would be needed to ensure conditions for their free and unimpeded return.

UNHCR would ascertain and record the repatriation wishes of each potential returnee, issue documentation, and establish and manage reception centres for the returnees in Western Sahara.

MINURSO's full cost should come from the assessed contribution of Member States, the Secretary-General recommended.

The referendum

Voting would be by secret ballot, with arrangements made for those who are illiterate or incapacitated. The final result would be determined by a simple majority of valid votes cast.

If the decision is for independence, all remaining Moroccan troops would begin withdrawal within 24 hours and be out of the Territory within six weeks. Withdrawals would be monitored by MINURSO's military unit.

If the decision is for integration with Morocco, any POLISARIO troops who have not returned to take part in the referendum would begin demobilization within 24 hours of the proclamation of the result, completing that process within four weeks, as monitored by MINURSO's military unit.

After the results are announced, UN personnel would begin to leave Western Sahara.

Zia Rizvi of Pakistan was named Deputy Special Representative of MINURSO as of 1 June. He had been Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Coordinator of the UN Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan.

Macaire Pedanou was appointed Chairman of the Identification Commission. A national of Togo, he has been a Director in the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship.

On 25 June, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of Major-General Armand Roy of Canada as the Force Commander of MINURSO's military component. From October 1968 to April 1969, Maj.-Gen. Roy served as Adjutant of the Canadian contingent in the UN Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). He served a second tour in UNFICYP as a Company Commander from March to November 1973.

At a pledging conference held in Geneva on 13 June, voluntary contributions of about $9.5 million were pledged by Algeria, Austria, Canada, Japan, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and Uruguay in support of UNHCR's repatriation programme. Germany, France, Morocco, the United Kingdom and the United States indicated that they would announce their pledges later.

Opening the conference, the Secretary-General said that without the repatriation programme, "a fair and impartial referendum could not take place". His discussions in Africa with leaders of Algeria, Morocco and POLISARIO had reinforced his optimism with respect to the positive role which the UN could play in solving the question of Western Sahara.

On 28 June, a UN official stated that Special Representative Manz had held an informal two-day meeting in Geneva for an exchange of views with representatives of Morocco and POLISARIO on matters relating to the preparation for MINURSO's deployment. He had informed the Secretary-General of the results regarding practical measures to be taken in the immediate future.

The official added that it was intended to continue the process of close and informal consultations with all concerned until the cease-fire, prior to referendum.

UN Photo 130163/Y. Nagata

The people of the Territory look to their future.

In the aftermath

Security Council implements resolution 687, monitors Iraqi disarmament, creates compensation fund

In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf crisis, the Security Council acted to implement its historic resolution 687 (1991), setting detailed conditions for the formal cease-fire ending the hostilities resulting from Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

Among other things, the 15-member Council:

- Established on 9 April a UN observer mission (UNIKOM) to monitor the Iraq-Kuwait border;
- Dispatched expert teams in May and June to oversee the transfer and destruction of Iraqi weapons, including chemical, biological and nuclear arms, under the auspices of the Special Commission on Iraqi disarmament;
- Created on 20 May a compensation fund for claims against Iraq resulting from its 2 August 1990 invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

Council resolution 687, the complex, 34-paragraph text laying down specific conditions by which international peace and security was to be restored in the area, was adopted on 3 April, a little over a month after the conflict ended. Iraq officially accepted its terms on 6 April. It was the fourteenth Council resolution in a series of Council actions dealing with the consequences of Kuwait's takeover.

UN Photo 158321/J

Weapons outside the Hussein Mosque in Karbala in southern Iraq.

UN Photo 158310U Isaac

Street scene, Erbil, Iraq, April 1991.

"An uneasy peace now prevails, and it is important that the international community shows the same determination and efficiency in securing the peace that it exerted in ending aggression."

— Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar at Saint Galien University, Switzerland, 17 June

Among other things, the Council called on Iraq to accept a 1963 border agreement with Kuwait, to compensate Kuwait and other countries for damage arising from the seven-month occupation, and to relinquish or destroy weapons of mass destruction.

Arms embargo

The Council on 17 June, in unanimously adopting resolution 699 (1991), decided that the full cost of the destruction of proscribed weapons within Iraq, as outlined in resolution 687, should be borne by Iraq. The Secretary-General was to recommend, the Council said, the most effective means by which Iraq might meet those obligations. Maximum assistance, in cash and in kind, was asked from all Member States, to ensure fast and effective destruction of those weapons.

The items proscribed include: chemical and biological weapons; ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres; and nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapons-usable material. The Council also decided that all States should continue to prevent the sale or supply to Iraq of all forms of conventional weapons and military equipment.

Also proscribed are: research, development, support and manufacturing facilities for those items; repair and production facilities for ballistic missiles concerned; technology under licensing used in the production, utilization or stockpiling of proscribed items; and personnel or materials for training or technical support services.

Also on 17 June, in resolution 700 (1991), the Council approved a set of guidelines to facilitate full international implementation of the arms embargo provisions of resolution 687. The Council's Sanctions Committee was to monitor the arms embargo and report to the Council every three months.

In a report to the Council *(S/22660)*, the Secretary-General recommended that international organizations take appropriate steps to assist in ensuring full compliance with the arms embargo.

Iraqi disarmament

The Secretary-General, in line with resolution 687, in April established a 21-member Special Commission on Iraqi disarmament.

Specifically, in paragraph 9(b), the Council had called for: "immediate on-site inspection of Iraq's biological, chemical and missile capabilities"; the yielding to the Commission by Iraq of the weapons specified "for destruction, removal or rendering harmless", and destruction by Iraq, under Commission supervision, of all its missile capabilities, including launchers; and provision by the Commission of assistance to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the removal of Iraq's nuclear-weapons-usable materials.

On 22 April, Rolf Ekeus of Sweden was named Executive

Chairman of the Special Commission. Robert L. Gallucci of the United States was appointed Deputy Executive Chairman.

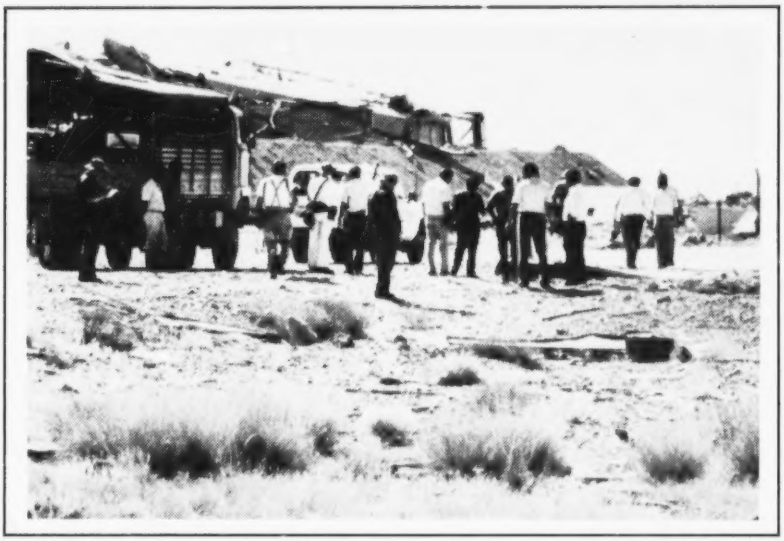
Other members are from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom, USSR and Venezuela.

The body deals with issues related to biological and chemical weapons, ballistic missiles, nuclear-weapons capabilities, and compliance and operations support. Technical experts serve as inspectors, disposal teams and field support officers. The IAEA is to monitor the removal of nuclear-weapons-usable material.

The Secretary-General reported *(S/22614)* on 17 May that the Special Commission would operate in three stages: gathering and assessment of information; disposal of weapons and facilities; and monitoring of verification and compliance. On-site inspections had begun, the report states, on the basis of information provided by Iraq and developed independently on the location, amounts and types of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles.

In the course of its work, the Commission was to check the information gathered against the actual situation in the field, assess the magnitude of the task of disposal of weapons and facilities, and determine the modalities for carrying it out.

To ensure safe access to specific sites, the Commission engaged teams of explosive ordnance disposal experts, construction engineers and security personnel. The teams were to give paramount concern to the safety of the inspections teams and the local population.



UN Photo 158423/P. Sudhakaran

Teams of experts visited sites in Iraq.

Missions to the area

In May and June, the Special Commission dispatched teams of experts to Iraq in connection with the ongoing disarmament process outlined in resolution 687. The missions regarding nuclear armaments were conducted jointly with the IAEA.

On 18 April, Iraq had submitted to the IAEA Director-General the declaration required by paragraph 12 of resolution 687, specifying the locations, amounts, and types of all nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapons-usable material, or any sub-systems or components, or any research, development, support or manufacturing facilities related to the above.

Executive Chairman Ekeus said the Commission was to assist the IAEA in disposing Iraq's nuclear-weapons capabilities and submit a plan for verification of Iraq's undertaking not to acquire such weapons in future. The elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, he said, was an essential ingredient in achieving a lasting peace in the region.

An IAEA plan for destroying, removing or rendering harmless the items specified in resolution 687 was submitted on 17 May *(S/22615)* to the Security Council.

According to the IAEA, nuclear-weapons-usable material, or "direct-use material" could not be destroyed or rendered harmless in Iraq, and the Agency would have to take exclusive control of any such material for custody and removal. This was considered to be the foremost task to be undertaken.

It said negotiations were under way with countries possessing the technology for the transportation and storage of direct-use material to ascertain their willingness to receive it. Consideration was also being given to various options for the long-term disposal or rendering harmless of this material.

The Agency reported that the declaration of Iraq listed only direct-use material and a yellow-cake production unit. Inspections of sites for other items subject to paragraph 12 of resolution 687 would aim to determine if such items existed and, if so, to remove, destroy or render them

harmless. It also said that the identification of research, development, support or manufacturing facilities and materials relevant or connected to reprocessing of irradiated fuel and isotopic enrichment of uranium would be given priority, as they were capable of producing additional direct-use material.

Site inspections

The first on-site inspection of a nuclear facility in Iraq took place from 14 to 22 May, with the assistance and cooperation of the Special Commission. A team of 34 experts from 19 countries participated.

They examined the main Iraqi nuclear research facility at Al Tuwaitha and one additional site in the Baghdad area, to verify quantities and conditions of nuclear materials there as declared by Iraq.

The IAEA had taken custody, it reported, of nuclear-weapons-usable material, applying Agency verification, containment and surveillance procedures, as required by resolution 687.

Iraq fully cooperated and complied with all the Agency team's requests, it reported. Further operations to remove from Iraq all nuclear-weapons-usable materials were being planned.

A second expert group of 18 members arrived in Iraq on 22 June to continue inspection of Iraq's nuclear capabilities, planning to visit again the Tuwaitha site, as well as some newly designated sites.

Access denied

The team began its inspection activities on 23 June. The IAEA on 26 June announced that Iraqi military authorities had twice denied or restricted an IAEA inspection team access to a designated site. After protests, full access was granted on 26 June.

IAEA Director-General Hans Blix reported those developments to the Security Council, which met on 26 June to consider the situation.

It was reported that Iraqi authorities had denied for three days access to a site in the Abu Gharaib Army Barracks in Baghdad, while "considerable activity ... involving cranes, trucks, forklifts, other equipment and work crews" took place. When access was finally granted, "activities which had been observed from a distance during the first visit had ceased and objects that had been seen had been removed".

The Council, after debating the reports, adjourned without taking action.

In debate, the United States charged that Iraq had obstructed the work of the inspection team and was engaged in "nuclear deception".

France said Iraqi violation of several provisions of resolutions 687 and 699 was "extremely serious and must never be repeated".

The United Kingdom said Iraqi authorities at the highest appropriate level must be called upon to reaffirm their commitment to cooperate fully with the Commission and the IAEA, "not just in word but in deed".

Iraq replied that "given the lack of concrete evidence of the non-cooperation of the Iraqi authorities with the IAEA mission, we are faced with a non-issue". Iraq asserted it was "honest and sincere" in its cooperation with all UN missions.

Council action

On 28 June, the Security Council met again to consider the question of Iraqi non-cooperation. In a statement made by Council President Jean-Jacques Bechio of Côte d'Ivoire, the body asked Iraq to grant a nuclear inspection team "immediate and unimpeded access" to a site it had attempted to inspect on 28 June, as well as to any other site deemed necessary, stating that "any recurrence of non-compliance would have serious consequences".

It was reported also on 28 June that Iraqi military authorities had denied an inspection team immediate access to a military transportation facility east of Fallujah, that equipment had been removed contrary to a UN official's request, and that the UN team had been obstructed from carrying out duties in accordance with resolution 687.

UN Photo 158429/P. Sudhakaran

Weapons are to be rendered harmless or dismantled and destroyed.

It was also reported that Iraqi troops had fired guns into the air while trying to seize UN cameras recording the incident.

The Council strongly deplored the incidents, condemning the conduct of Iraqi authorities.

On 28 June, Iraq said *(S/22749)* it wanted to avoid any incident that might cast a shadow on its endeavour to fulfil its obligations and cooperate with the UN. The Iraqi President had ordered all bodies and authorities which UN officials might wish to inspect to grant the necessary permission without hesitation.

Council members asked the Secretary-General to send a high-level mission to Baghdad to convey to the highest levels of the Iraqi Government "the Council's urgent demand for unequivocal assurances that the Government will take all necessary measures to ensure that no hindrances are placed in the way of the discharge of the Special Commission's mandate".

The mission, composed of the Director-General of the IAEA, the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission and the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, arrived in Baghdad on 30 June. It was to discuss with the Iraqis the complete freedom of movement and immediate access of UN inspectors in Iraq and the safety of all inspectors on the ground.

On 30 June and 1 July, it met with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi.

Chemical inspection

An on-site inspection of an Iraqi chemical weapons facility, conducted by a team of experts from eight countries, took place in mid-June.

Following a visit to the Samarra chemical weapons plant northwest of Baghdad, the group reported that chemical weapons remained in Iraq following the Persian Gulf war.

The team verified the presence on the site of mustard gas and phosphorous nerve agent, both as bulk agent and in the form of munitions, and a number of precursor chemicals acquired from abroad. The group, which included officials of the World Health Organization, reported that Iraqi authorities were cooperative throughout the initial inspection.

On 9 June, Iraq had rejected *(S/22682)* liability for the cost of destroying its chemical weapons. However, it was willing to voluntarily destroy or render harmless those weapons. It had, it said, the necessary expertise and technical facilities to do so, under the supervision and to the satisfaction of UN experts.

Compensation Fund created

The Security Council on 20 May formally created a Fund from which compensation for claims against Iraq arising from its invasion and occupation of Kuwait would be paid.

By resolution 692 (1991), adopted by a vote of 14 to none, with 1 abstention (Cuba), the Council also decided to establish a Commission to administer the Fund, to be known as the UN Compensation Fund.

Section E of resolution 687 reaffirmed Iraq's liability under international law for any direct loss, damage or injury to foreign Governments, nationals and corporations, as a result of its unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

UN Photo 158255/J Isaac

An office at the Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters that was ransacked.

The liability was without prejudice to the debts and obligations of Iraq arising prior to 2 August 1990, which would be addressed "through the normal mechanisms". Iraq was called upon to "adhere scrupulously" to all of its foreign debt obligations. The Council, under resolution 687, made the creation of the Fund one of the conditions upon which the cease-fire in the Persian Gulf war was contingent.

The Council decided that the requirement for the Iraqi contribution should apply in the manner to be prescribed by the Fund's Governing Council with respect to all Iraqi petroleum and petroleum products exported after 3 April 1991, as well as such petroleum and petroleum products exported earlier but not delivered or not paid for as a specific result of the prohibitions contained in resolution 661 (1990).

According to the resolution, the Security Council intended to retain or to take action to reimpose the prohibition against the import of petroleum and petroleum products originating in Iraq and financial transactions related to them, should it be notified by the Governing Council that Iraq had failed to carry out its (Governing Council's) decisions.

On 30 May, the Secretary-General suggested that the compensation to be paid by Iraq for damage caused by its invasion and occupation of Kuwait—as stipulated by resolution 687—should not exceed 30 per cent of the annual value of the exports of petroleum and petroleum products from Iraq.

On 20 May, Iraq protested *(S/22629)* the Security Council decision to establish a Compensation Fund. The Council had violated international law by not asking the United States and its partners to compensate Iraq for the damage and destruction inflicted on Iraq during the war, it stated.

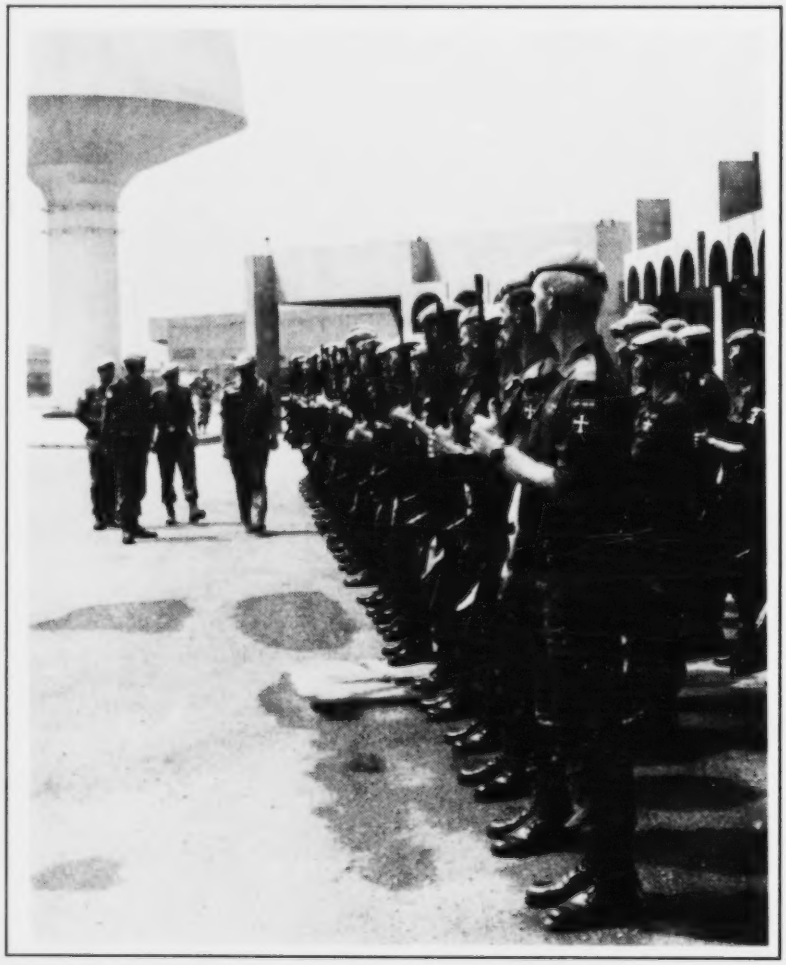
Iraq stated that it had been suffering from a full economic embargo since August 1990 and needed many times its oil revenue to meet urgent requirements for reconstructing the country. For that reason, Iraq wanted a moratorium of five years, during which no part of its limited oil revenues would be appropriated. By ignoring that request, he said, the Council was failing to respect the right to life of the Iraqi people.

UNIKOM

The Security Council created UNIKOM in adopting unanimously resolution 689 (1991).

The Secretary-General stated that UNIKOM's military contingent would comprise armed and unarmed military personnel. It would not be authorized to take physical action to prevent the entry of military personnel or equipment into the demilitarized zone (DMZ), nor would it assume responsibilities within the competence of the host Governments, such as civilian administration of the DMZ and the maintenance of law and order.

UNIKOM would seek to ensure that no military personnel and equipment were within the DMZ. To that end, it would: monitor the withdrawal of any armed forces in the zone; operate observation posts on the main roads to monitor traffic;



UN Photo

UNIKOM was on the job by early May.

operate such posts at selected locations within the zone; conduct land and air patrols throughout the DMZ; and carry out investigations.

It would also aim to deter boundary violations and observe any hostile or potentially hostile actions, using force only in self-defence.

The Mission, to consist eventually of up to 1,440 military personnel provided by Member States, would monitor the 40-kilometre-long Khor Abdullah waterway between the two countries, as well as the DMZ, extending 10 kilometres into Iraq and 5 kilometres into Kuwait, based on borders established under a 1963 agreement.

On 10 April, the Secretary-General appointed Major-General Günther Greindl of Austria as UNIKOM's Chief Military Observer. UNIKOM has contingents from Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, USSR, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

On 3 May, appropriations totalling $60,977,000 to cover operation costs for UNIKOM's first six months, from 9 April to 8 October 1991, were approved by the General Assembly.

Boundary Commission

The Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission was established on 17 May pursuant to resolution 687. It completed an on-site visit from 16 to 18 June, meeting in Kuwait City with Kuwaiti officials and experts, and in Baghdad with Iraqi officials and experts.

Commission members include three independent experts: Professor Mochtar Kusuma-Atmadja, former Indonesian Foreign Minister, Chairman; Ian Brook of *Swedsurvey*, Sweden, and William Robertson, Chief Executive, Department of Survey and Land Information, New Zealand. In addition, Iraq is represented by Ambassador Riyadh Al-Qaysi and Kuwait by Dr. Tariq A. Razouki.

Iraq on 23 May registered its discontent with the border arrangement in a letter to the Secretary-General. It said the question of the legal boundary was unresolved because Iraq had never ratified the 1963 agreement. The imposition of the border by the Council was a dangerous precedent and "an assault on the sovereignty of States".

MAP NO. 3528 UNITED NATIONS
JANUARY 1991

The human cost

Survival is harsh, recovery slow in hard-hit areas

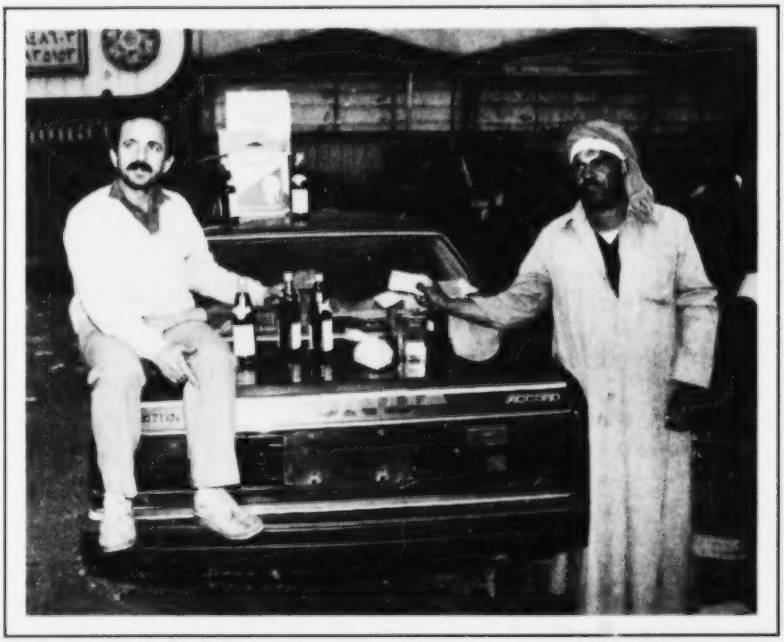
Months after the Persian Gulf war had ended, the lives of millions of people in the area were still in turmoil. Tattered social and economic structures were barely starting to recover from the ravages of war, ecological disaster, civil strife and the most massive displacement of civilian populations in recent history. Survival was the immediate goal.

A wave of unrest struck Iraq immediately after the cessation on 28 February of hostilities between Iraqi and coalition forces. Widespread fighting triggered what had become by early April a vast humanitarian calamity. In a matter of days, an estimated 1.5 million Iraqi citizens, mostly Kurds, fled towards and across bleak mountain borders with Turkey and Iran to escape the conflict.

On 2 April, the Secretary-General expressed his grave concern about the substantial increase in the number of Kurdish and Shi'ite refugees entering Iran and Turkey. He urged maximum restraint and a peaceful resolution of the situation.

Reacting to the crisis, the Security Council on 5 April demanded that Iraq immediately end the repression of its civilian population, including those in Kurdish-populated areas, and insisted that it allow international humanitarian organizations immediate access to all those in need of assistance.

By resolution 688 (1991), the Council called the massive flow of refugees across international frontiers and cross-border incursions a threat to international peace and security in the region. The Secretary-General was asked to send a mission to investigate the situation.



UN Photo 158179/J Isaac

Kuwaiti tradesmen set up shop on the hood of an automobile.

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 10 to 3 (Cuba, Yemen, Zimbabwe), with 2 abstentions (China, India).

Turkey charged Iraq with deliberately pressing some 220,000 Iraqi citizens, many of them women and children, towards the Turkish border, in order to drive them out of their country.

Iran at the Council session said that it had had "the humanitarian duty of providing refuge . . . to more than 110,000 Iraqi civilians escaping their own Government's armed forces".

Iraq asserted that saboteurs who had penetrated its borders had killed many innocent people and, through terror and intimidation, convinced many citizens to leave the country. The Government and the army had to protect security and ensure law and order. The

Iraqi Government had declared a general amnesty. All Iraqi citizens could return at any time, it said.

Many speakers at the Council session stressed that their action in favour of Iraqi refugees was purely humanitarian and that they were committed to Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

In high gear

UN relief efforts in the Persian Gulf area went into high gear in April to cope with the Kurdish emergency. Sadruddin Aga Khan was appointed on 9 April by Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to coordinate the operation.

As the Secretary-General's Executive Delegate, he was asked to harmonize efforts by a dozen UN agencies, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO).

Both the Executive Delegate and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata saw human suffering at close range when they visited the area on separate missions in April.

The Executive Delegate signed on 18 April in Baghdad a Memorandum of Understanding with Iraq authorizing UN humanitarian operations along its northern borders. A mission headed by the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, Eric Suy, had helped negotiate the agreement.

UNHCR delivered 50 tons of relief aid to refugee camps in Iran and Turkey.

By mid-May, UNHCR was managing a large camp set up in Zakho in northern Iraq. A UN guards contingent numbering some 500 was being dispatched to create a climate of confidence, ensure the safety of UN staff and protect UN premises. They would have no police function, but their visible uniformed presence, along with that of the remaining coalition troops, was expected to encourage those who had been displaced to return home. Earlier that month, Iraq had rejected the idea of a UN police presence on its soil.

UN Photo

Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on 18 April in Baghdad.

By mid-June, with the relief operation in full swing, the UN Regional Humanitarian Plan of Action relating to the Crisis between Iraq and Kuwait, originally drafted in October 1990, had been updated three times. *(For more on the Gulf refugee situation, see page 47.)*

Widespread damage

The refugee crisis flared up against a background of destruction in Iraq and Kuwait. The impact of the hostilities on Iraq's economic infrastructure had been described as "near-apocalyptic" by a UN mission headed by Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari, after visiting that country in March.

In April, Iraq asked the UN Sanctions Committee to allow it to sell some $2 billion worth of oil to buy food, medicines and other items.

Following reports that the situation in Iraq was worsening, Sadruddin Aga Khan flew to Baghdad on 29 June as the head of a high-level mission to assess Iraq's humanitarian needs and recommend measures to address them, including lifting of sanctions to allow Iraq to sell oil to alleviate the plight of its civilian population.

Seven months of Iraqi occupation—from 2 August 1990 to 28 February 1991—had turned Kuwait City into a ghost town and had an even more devastating effect on the country's economic and commercial life. This was one finding of another UN mission, headed by former Under-Secretary-General Abdulrahim A. Farah, which visited Kuwait from 16 March to 4 April.

The Farah mission reported to the Security Council *(S/22535)* that the physical infrastructure supporting basic services—electricity, water, waste disposal—had been rendered inoperative, and the quality and availability of health services had been dramatically downgraded. Education had come to a halt. Libraries, museums and art collections had been plundered and vandalized by the occupying forces.

The mission also found ports largely destroyed, oil production and refining and related offloading activities crippled and the financial system severely disrupted.

The mission predicted that it would take months—even years—before the country recovered.

A $4.1 million three-month emergency plan to help war-scarred Kuwait meet its most urgent health needs was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 9 April.

It was to deal with the health care system and air, water and sea pollution.

In June, Kuwait asked the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to help prevent the possible illegal sale of tens of thousands of its art pieces that had been taken during the Gulf crisis.

The removal of terracotta figurines, pottery, bronzes, ceramics, seals and jewels from the Kuwait National Museum was confirmed by UNESCO.

Iraq said that the Kuwaiti museum pieces were being "preserved in the Iraqi National Museum pending their transfer to Kuwait by mutual agreement between the two parties and under the supervision of the United Nations Secretariat".

On 26 March, the Secretary-General designated Assistant-Secretary-General Richard Foran as the official responsible for coordinating the return of property from Iraq to Kuwait.

Blazing oil wells

Four months after the desert war ended, Kuwait reported that "some 199 wells had been extinguished or capped", and 533 were still burning.

The blazing Kuwaiti oil fields were described as "hell on earth", posing a major environmental hazard.

Extensive aerial surveys carried out by a UN Environment Programme (UNEP) team in March and April highlighted a new danger. Large oil lakes were being formed by oil wells that had stopped burning and started gushing. It was feared that this surface oil would find its way to the sea, further threatening the marine environment already damaged by a huge oil slick in February.

The UNEP team also found pervasive land degradation in Kuwait due to defensive constructions such as trenches and hardened personnel shelters, tank and armored vehicle tracks and craters produced by bombs and missiles.

The UNEP survey was part of a 90-day assessment of environmental damage in the region, launched in March with the help of WHO and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in association with the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Governments of the region. A Special Fund has been set up to finance the studies.

WMO is heading a project to evaluate atmospheric pollution resulting from the Kuwaiti oil fires, which experts estimate will continue to burn for about two years.

A number of ecologically important sites in Saudi Arabia had been cleared by the end of May with help from the Persian Gulf Oil Pollution Disaster Fund, set up in March by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

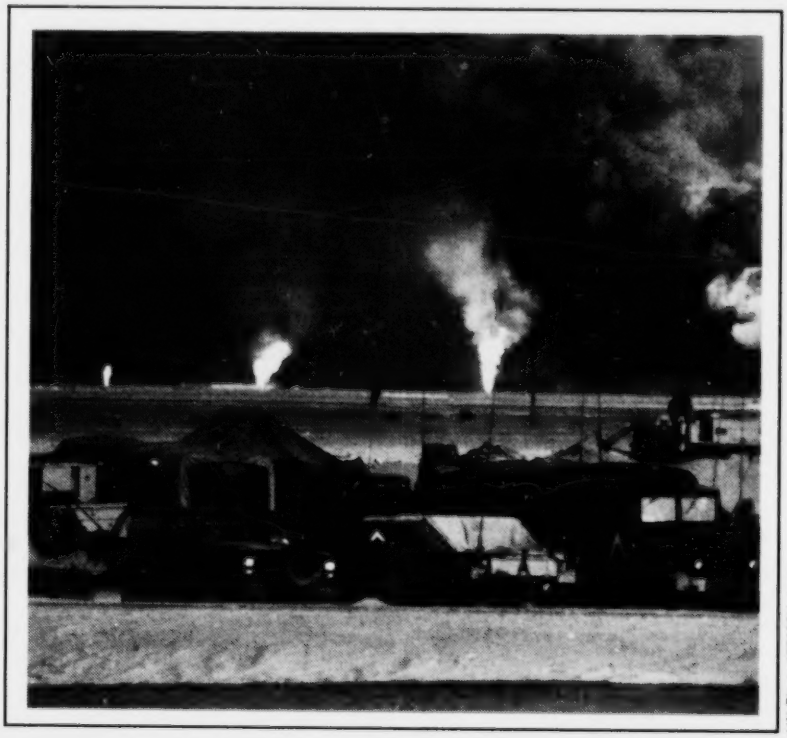
In an aerial operation supervised by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), more than 90,000 hectares in northern Iraq were sprayed to combat pests which threatened wheat and barley crops.

The Gulf crisis and war were an economic catastrophe for Kuwait and Iraq and many other developing countries.

The *World Economic Survey, 1991*, released at UN Headquarters on 2 July, reported that the immediate effects of the crisis on the world economy were minor. Nevertheless, the crisis was a grim reminder of the vulnerability of the world economy to external shocks, the Survey asserted.

Analysing the impact of the crisis, the Survey states that the economy of Kuwait came to a virtual halt in the second half of 1990.

The Security Council on 29 April issued a "solemn appeal" for assistance to 21 most affected countries, which had asked for UN help.



UN Photo 158205/J Isaac

'Important step'

Unlimited cease-fire to be implemented in Cambodia; foreign military assistance to stop

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar on 26 June expressed gratification at the decision of members of the Supreme National Council (SNC) of Cambodia to implement an unlimited cease-fire and to stop receiving foreign military assistance.

The decision was taken at an SNC meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, from 24 to 26 June, under the chairmanship of Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The Secretary-General in his statement welcomed the final communiqué adopted at the meeting.

"This decision represents an important step towards the restoration of peace in Cambodia", Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar declared. He recalled that, in his report *(A/45/605)* to the last General Assembly on the situation in that South-East Asian country, he had expressed the hope that the SNC would promptly reach the compromises necessary to enable it to assume its role in the settlement process and that it would be able to agree as soon as possible to a voluntary cease-fire and moratorium on arms supplies.

The Secretary-General earnestly hoped that the Council would continue to work vigorously towards national reconciliation, so as to create a climate conducive to an early completion of the negotiating process and to the adoption of a comprehensive political settlement in the framework of the Paris Conference on Cambodia (PCC).

The Council is considered to be "a unique legitimate body" in which national sovereignty and unity would be enshrined during the transitional period.

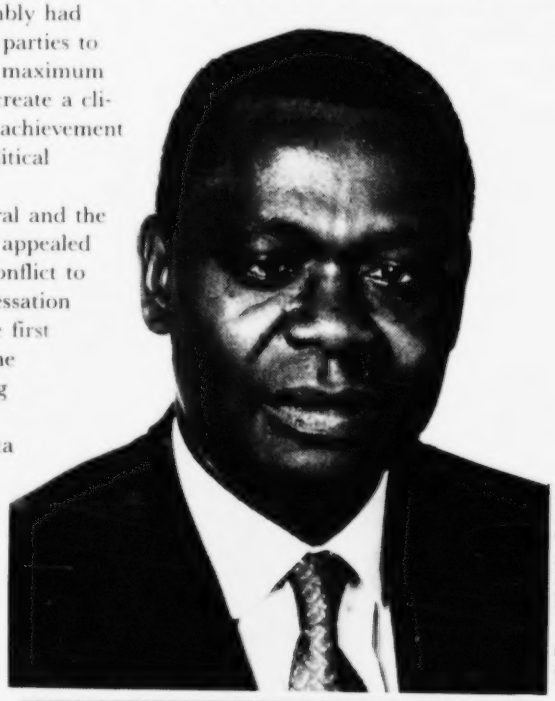
A voluntary cease-fire had gone into effect in Cambodia beginning on 1 May 1991, following an appeal by Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar and the Foreign Ministers of France and Indonesia—the PCC's two Co-Chairmen.

In a 22 April joint statement, they expressed concern over reports of intensified fighting in Cambodia, recalling that both the Security Council and the Assembly had unanimously urged all parties to the conflict to exercise maximum self-restraint, so as to create a climate conducive to the achievement of a comprehensive political settlement.

The Secretary-General and the Co-Chairmen strongly appealed to "all parties to the conflict to observe a temporary cessation of hostilities", from the first of May at least until the conclusion of a meeting to be convened by the Co-Chairmen in Jakarta with the members of the SNC. At that meeting, held from 2 to 4 June, the 26 November 1990 draft agreements *(A/46/61)* and other pending issues were discussed. The proposed agreements cover major aspects of a comprehensive political settlement for Cambodia.

On 6 May, the Secretary-General and the Co-Chairmen welcomed the voluntary cease-fire accepted by the parties in the conflict. The cease-fire was "a sign of the commitment by the parties concerned to reach a positive result", they stated.

A team, led by Major-General Timothy Dibuama, Military Adviser to the Secretary-General, was sent to the area to make an on-the-spot review of the situation.



UN Photo 177454/M Grant

Maj.-Gen. Dibuama, Military Adviser.

Security Council deplores deportation of Palestinians

UN Photo 177813/E. Debebe

The Security Council on 24 May deplored the deportation by Israel of four Palestinians on 18 May from the occupied territories and called for their safe and immediate return.

In unanimously adopting resolution 694 (1991), the Council declared that Israel's action violated the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention, which was applicable to all Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. Israel should refrain from deporting any Palestinian civilian from those territories, it stated.

The Council met at the request of its members belonging to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries—Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Yemen, Zaire, Zimbabwe—to "examine the situation created by the recent deportations by Israel of four Palestinians from the occupied territories".

On 20 May, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar strongly deplored the deportations. He recalled the Council statement on 27 March which, among other things, called on Israel to desist from deporting Palestinians.

Call repeated

In a 9 April report (*S/22472*), the Secretary-General repeated his belief that a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in time of war could facilitate discussion of possible measures to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

By resolution 681 (1990), adopted unanimously on 20 December 1990, the Council asked the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to develop further the idea of convening a meeting of the Parties.

On 18 April, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People strongly deplored the intensification of Israel's settlements policy and practice. It asked that Israel cease its settlement activities immediately and accept the *de jure* applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories.

'Repressive' policies

The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories concluded on 5 June a two-week field mission to Damascus, Amman and Cairo.

Established by the General Assembly in December 1968, the Special Committee is mandated to investigate Israeli practices and to report back to the Assembly through the Secretary-General. It has been denied access by Israel to the territories and relies, therefore, on Israeli press reports and on oral evidence by persons having first-hand knowledge of the situation in those territories.

Forty witnesses

During its fact-finding mission, the Special Committee heard some 40 witnesses about the situation in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. All interviewed testified that the human rights situation in the occupied territories, already critical since the beginning of the uprising and its repression, had further deteriorated in recent months. The Persian Gulf crisis and the ensuing war was said to have led to increasingly repressive policies and practices by the occupying Power.

In addition, witnesses said, increasingly restrictive regulations for the issuance of identification cards had led to a situation in which tens of thousands of Palestinian workers were prevented from continuing their employment inside Israel.

Mandate of Golan Heights force extended

The Security Council on 30 May decided unanimously to renew the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for a six-month period until 30 November 1991. The 1,331-member Force, established in 1974 to supervise the cease-fire between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights area, draws troops from Austria, Canada, Finland and Poland.

Major-General Roman Misztal of Poland will take over as Commander of UNDOF beginning 1 October 1991, replacing Major-General Adolf Radauer of Austria, who has commanded the Force since 10 September 1988.

In adopting resolution 695 (1991), the Council also called on the parties to implement immediately resolution 338 (1973), calling for a cease-fire following the 1973 hostilities and the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which sets out principles for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

UN Photo 158098/J

Austrian troops of UNDOF.

The Secretary-General reported (*S/22631*) that UNDOF had continued to perform its functions effectively, with the cooperation of the parties. During the period 24 November 1990 to 20 May 1991, the situation in the Israel-Syria sector had remained quiet and there had been no serious incidents, he stated.

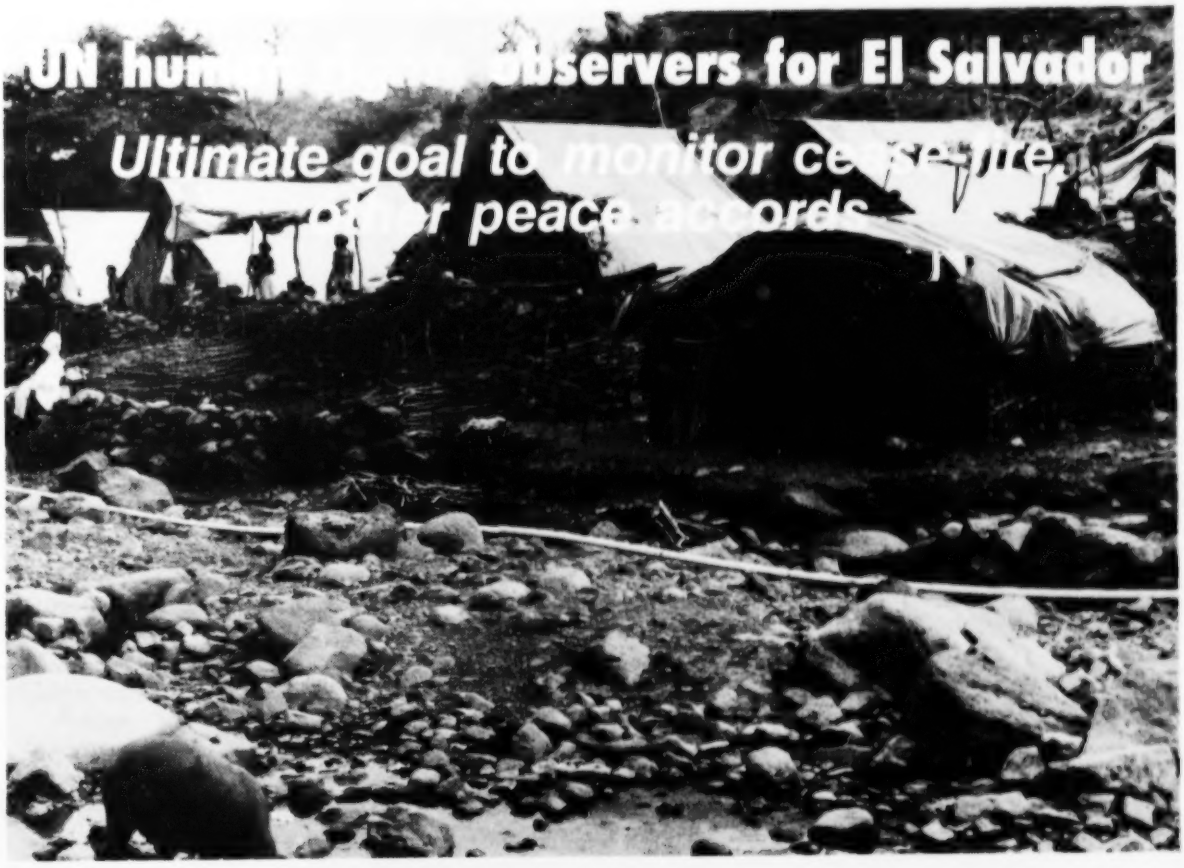
Agreement on 'land for peace' formula and two-State solution for Palestinian problem

Participants in two special meetings concerned with Palestinian rights have backed a "land for peace" formula and a two-State solution—one Israeli, one Palestinian—to the problem of Palestine.

The meetings were the eighth UN North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, held in Montreal from 28 to 30 June, and the sixth UN European Seminar, convened in Madrid from 27 to 30 May.

Participants, which included representatives of Governments, NGO Coordinating Committees, and non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, continued to support the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, to be held under UN auspices.

An International Encounter for European Journalists on the Question of Palestine was held in Helsinki from 3 to 5 June to consider the possible dynamics for a Palestinian/Israeli peace process.



UNHCR/12052/82/J. Cuénod

ONUSAL will work to improve the human rights scene in El Salvador.

While UN-brokered negotiations between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) picked up steam in Mexico and Venezuela, the Security Council on 20 May decided unanimously to set up a 170-member observer force whose ultimate task will be to verify compliance by the parties with a cease-fire agreement.

The Council's move came after the parties agreed on 27 April in Mexico City on a package of important constitutional reforms regarding the armed forces, the judiciary and the electoral system.

Because a cease-fire was not achieved, the Council instructed the newly-created UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) to limit itself initially to verifying compliance with the San José Agreement, a human rights accord signed by the parties in the Costa Rican capital in July 1990.

Security Council resolution 693 (1991), which created ONUSAL "to monitor all agreements concluded between the two parties", carefully limits the Group's "initial mandate in its first phase as an integrated peace-keeping operation" to that specific task. Any subsequent task or phase will be subject to Council approval.

The Mission will have an initial mandate period of 12 months at an estimated cost of approximately $32 million. A $13.8 million budget for the first six months of operations was authorized by the General Assembly on 21 June.

The Mexico Agreement was reached after intense face-to-face negotiations (4-27 April) conducted by Alvaro de Soto, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Central America. Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, also participated in the first phase of the talks, which focused on cease-fire questions.

The Agreement was hailed by Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar as "a victory for the Salvadorean people". In a statement on 29 April, he thanked the Presidents of Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela and Spain for the "very important role" they had played in ensuring the success of the talks.

The two parties met again between 25 May and 2 June in Caraballeda,

Venezuela, and from 16 to 22 June in Querétaro, México. Mr. de Soto and Mr. Goulding attended.

The Querétaro round recessed "on a positive note", a UN official told the press. Although no formal agreements had been expected or were concluded, "progress was made both on key aspects of the armed forces and on technical cease-fire questions", he added. Meantime, Mr. de Soto was in San Salvador on 24 June for consultations with President Alfredo Cristiani.

ONUCA mandate extended

The Security Council on 6 May extended for another six months, until 7 November 1991, the mandate of the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA). The Group's strength will be reduced from 187 to 130 military observers.

ONUCA was set up in 1989 by the Council to monitor compliance by the five Central American Governments—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua—with their security commitments under the 1987 Esquipulas II Agreement. A key commitment was to stop aiding irregular forces and insurgent movements operating in the region and to prevent the use of their territories for attacks on other States.

A 'progressive approach'

ONUSAL will actively monitor the human rights situation in the war-torn Central American nation and investigate specific cases of alleged human rights violations. It will also promote human rights and make recommendations to eliminate violations and encourage respect for those rights.

With headquarters in the capital city of San Salvador, ONUSAL will also open regional offices there, as well as in the San Miguel, San Vicente and Santa Ana regions. At least 90 international civilian staff (coordinators, monitors, educators, and legal and political affairs officers), 66 police personnel and 15 military liaison officers would be required.

During the 60- to 90-day initial phase, ONUSAL would not directly investigate specific cases unless they were "especially significant", the Secretary-General informed the Council *(S/22494)*. This "progressive approach" was highly advisable since ONUSAL would start to work before a cease-fire was in place. After that, the Mission would exercise all its human rights functions.

A preliminary mission sent by Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar to El Salvador in March concluded that "while the armed conflict could pose risks to security of personnel not usually encountered in United Nations observation or verification missions, these were not to a degree that should prevent the establishment of the Mission before a cease-fire". Nevertheless, they advised precaution, since "certain extremist groups who tend to utilize violence to achieve their goals or to eliminate obstacles to them could resort to intimidation against the Mission's personnel".

A recent recruitment call for ONUSAL volunteers circulated among UN Secretariat staff warns them of "difficult or hazardous conditions" in remote locations involving some degree of "physical hardship and considerable stress". Prospective applicants must be fluent in Spanish. "Adaptability" and the capacity to make "independent and sound judgements" are deemed particularly important.

ONUSAL is the first UN peacekeeping mission to place special emphasis on human rights. Previous missions, including recent successful efforts in Haiti, Nicaragua and Namibia, have stressed military, police and electoral skills.

Guatemala peace talks continue

A new round of talks between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) ended on 22 June in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The talks aim at ending the internal armed conflict and bringing about national reconciliation.

The Cuernavaca round was held in the presence of the Conciliator, Monsignor Rodolfo Quezada Toruño, also Chairman of Guatemala's National Reconciliation Commission, and the UN Observer, Francesc Vendrell, representing the Secretary-General.

The talks focused on the issue of democratization, the first item, together with human rights, of a general agenda agreed upon by the parties in Mexico City on 26 April, along with a procedural framework for the negotiations.

Other items in the agenda are arrangements for a final cease-fire, signing of the agreement on a firm and lasting peace and demobilization, strengthening of civilian authority and the role of the army in a democratic society, identity and rights of indigenous peoples, constitutional reforms and electoral system, socio-economic aspects, agrarian situation, resettlement of populations uprooted by the armed conflict, and bases for bringing URNG into the political life of the country.

HAITI

Emergency aid approved, Water, road, school improvement is main target

The United Nations will launch later in 1991 a crash emergency aid programme to help the new democratically-elected Government of Haiti improve local roads and water supply, and rehabilitate school facilities and buildings.

Some 700 kilometres of local trunk roads in the impoverished, Caribbean island nation will be built to help to end the isolation of some areas before the next rainy season and 60 localities will receive safe water supply. The aid programme is expected to create some 3 million workdays of employment. Each of the proposed projects will take around three months, at an average cost of about $100,000.

The Haiti emergency effort was unanimously approved by the General Assembly on 17 May.

The programme, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar reported *(A/45/1002)*, will give the Haitian people "tangible proof that both the Government and the international community, beginning with the United Nations, are strongly committed to the democratization of the development process, the ultimate aim of which is to raise the people's standard of living through full participation by the people in decisions which affect them".

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said that Haiti does not have enough seed for the next growing season, because everything has been eaten. Haitian farmers often did not have even the most basic implements, such as hatchets and pickaxes, and were no longer able to feed their livestock. "There is a danger that endemic diseases such as anthrax and rabies will become more prevalent", he added.

A mission sent to Haiti by the Secretary-General in January and March to prepare the emergency programme, in consultation with the Government, reported that three quarters of the children suffered from malnutrition, half the school-age children did not attend class, and school facilities were either non-existent or extremely dilapidated. The only public hospital that is left in Port-au-Prince, the capital, had no running water and the country's major highway was barely passable.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar reported that the mission, headed by Paul-Marc Henry, ascertained that President Jean-Bertrand Aristide "wished to promote the welfare of the poorest social groups, namely, the inhabitants of rural areas".

The UN Observer Group for the Verification of the Elections in Haiti (ONUVEH) played a key role in successfully seeing the nation through its first free and democratic elections in December 1990 and President Aristide's peaceful inauguration on 7 February. ONUVEH was the first UN election-monitoring operation in an independent nation not involved in a regional conflict.

Haiti is the most densely populated and poorest nation in the Americas. It is also one of the world's least developed countries, with a per capita income of about $350 a year and a 78 per cent illiteracy rate.

The infant mortality rate is 94 per 1000. Sixty per cent of the 6.6 million Haitians are estimated to be unemployed, some 23 per cent of the jobless in urban areas.

UN Photo 131492/J. P. Vieth

The rural Haitian poor will benefit from the UN aid programme.

Security Council supports Secretary-General's proposal on Cyprus

In a statement on 28 June 1991 following consultations, Security Council President Jean-Jacques Bechio of Côte d'Ivoire said, on behalf of Council members, that the Council regretted that despite the Secretary-General's efforts, necessary progress had not yet been made in achieving an outline for an agreement on a settlement for Cyprus.

Council members reiterated their full support of the Secretary-General's efforts. They endorsed his view that a high-level international meeting "if properly prepared and of adequate duration", could give those efforts the necessary impetus and achieve an agreed outline of an overall settlement, Council members said.

They agreed with his judgement that before such a meeting could be held, "the two sides should be within agreement range on all the issues". All concerned were urged to spare no effort to achieve that goal.

Council members also endorsed the Secretary-General's intention to have his aides meet during July and August to try to work out a set of ideas that would bring the two sides "within agreement range on each of the eight headings of the outline". They asked the Secretary-General to pursue those consultations urgently and to assist in that process by making suggestions.

UN Photo 157810/J Isaac

British radio mobile unit of UNFICYP.

Sound financial basis

Meanwhile, the Council on 14 June extended the mandate of the UN Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for six months, until 15 December 1991. In unanimously adopting resolution 697 (1991), it also asked that the Secretary-General continue his mission of good offices and that all parties concerned continue to cooperate with the Force on the basis of its present mandate.

The Council also on 14 June unanimously adopted resolution 698 (1991), by which it concluded that a method of financing UNFICYP was needed which would put the Force on a sound and secure financial basis. The question of the Force's costs needed to be studied further, it stated, with the aim of reducing and clearly defining the costs for which the UN should be responsible.

The Force, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said, faced a "chronic and ever-deepening" financial crisis, imposing a "most unfair burden" on the troop-contributing countries—Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

He also said that the best way to finance UNFICYP on a more equitable basis would be for the UN share of costs to be financed from assessed contributions.

A UN team, which visited Cyprus in November 1990 to examine UNFICYP's organization and operations, concluded *(S/21982)* that continued reliance on voluntary contributions to finance the Force would jeopardize its future.

The Secretary-General on 31 May reported *(S/22665)* that UNFICYP's presence on the island remained "indispensable" to achieve Council objectives. The Force—which performed in an "exemplary manner", often under difficult circumstances—was created in 1964 to help prevent a recurrence of fighting and restore normal conditions to the island. With a total strength of 2,151 troops, it supervises cease-fire lines and undertakes humanitarian tasks. UNFICYP is under the command of Major General Clive Milner.

'A forgotten people'

Elements proposed for political settlement of Afghan question

Following an intensive round of consultations on the question of Afghanistan, the Secretary-General on 21 May issued a statement containing a number of elements which, he believed, could serve as a good basis for a political settlement which could be acceptable to the vast majority of Afghans.

The first element, he stated, was the need to preserve the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, and non-aligned and Islamic character of Afghanistan.

The second was the recognition of the right of Afghans to determine their own form of government and to choose their economic, political and social system, "free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever".

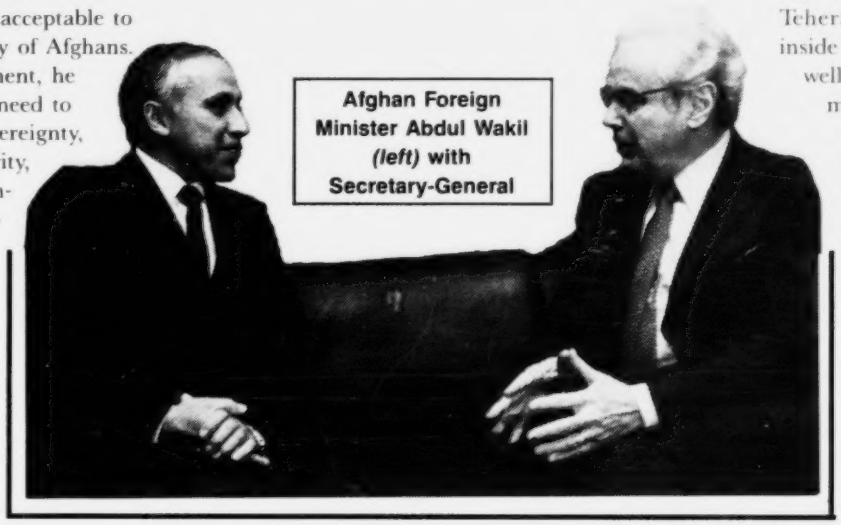
The third was the need for a transition period, details of which had to be worked out and agreed upon through an intra-Afghan dia logue, leading to the establishment of a broad-based Government.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar favoured the establishment of a "credible and impartial transition mechanism with appropriate powers and authority (yet to be specified) that would enjoy the confidence of the Afghan people and provide them with the necessary assurances to participate in free and fair elections, taking into account Afghan traditions, for the establishment of a broad-based government".

Hostilities should cease during the transition period and assistance would be available from the UN and any other international organization during the transition and in the electoral process.

The fourth element, the Secretary-General continued, was the necessity of an agreement—to be implemented together with all agreed transitional arrangements—to end arms supplies to all Afghan sides, by all.

The final element was the recognition of the need for adequate financial and material resources to alleviate the hardship of Afghan refugees and the creation of necessary conditions for their voluntary repatriation, as well as for Afghanistan's economic and social reconstruction.



Afghan Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil *(left)* with Secretary-General

UN Photo 177765/J Isaac

Intensive consultations are being conducted by the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, Benon Sevan, with all segments of the Afghan people, including political leaders of opposition groups and resistance commanders, based in Peshawar (Pakistan), Teheran (Iran) and inside Afghanistan, as well as with prominent Afghans residing outside the region. The Governments concerned have also been consulted.

The Secretary-General appealed to all Afghan leaders to put the interest of their people above all other interests and resolve their differences through a political process, ending the "long and devastating" war. He also called on all Governments concerned to support the political process and respect the right of Afghans to decide their own future.

On 22 May, the Afghan Government fully supported the Secretary-General's statement, stating that the proposals could lead to an end to war and bloodshed in Afghanistan and a firm foundation for ensuring peace in the country.

On 23 May, Pakistan also welcomed the five elements presented by the Secretary-General to serve as a basis for a political settlement in Afghanistan.

Accords on Angola signed in Lisbon

UNAVEM II
created to verify peaceful transition

Reuters/Bettmann

On 31 May in Lisbon, a historic agreement for the cessation of hostilities and peaceful transition in Angola was signed between the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

The agreement was signed by Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos and UNITA President Jonas Savimbi. Portuguese Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva, mediator of the peace talks between the parties, presided over the ceremony which was also attended by the two observers of the peace talks, Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh and United States Secretary of State James A. Baker III.

Also witnessing the ceremony were Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda, Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

"It is a cause of great satisfaction that the statesmanship demonstrated by all those involved in this process has finally cleared the way for an end to a cruel war which for too long has ravaged Angola", the Secretary-General declared three days later at an OAU summit in Abuja, Nigeria.

The agreement—called the Peace Accords for Angola ("Acordos de Paz para Angola")—called for a de facto cease-fire from 15 May 1991 and the holding of elections to be completed by 30 November 1992.

On 30 May, the Security Council in New York established a new mandate for the UN Angola Verification Mission, created in 1988 to oversee withdrawal of Cuban troops from that nation. UNAVEM II—as the new operation is to be called—will carry out new verification tasks arising from the Angola Peace Accords until general elections in that country are completed.

Just before the signing of the agreement, the Secretary-General discussed with the Angolan President details of the UN role in implementing the Accords and plans for emergency assistance and economic reconstruction. The UN role was also discussed with the Presidents of UNITA and OAU.

The Secretary-General told the press that the parties had taken the political decision to fulfil the agreement since "without an atmosphere of confidence, good faith and political will", the agreement would not be relevant.

He also congratulated the Portuguese Government for its great diplomatic success in bringing about the "historic agreement", which was important not only for Africa, but for the entire world community.

The Accords, he said, would "contribute to peace and development in southern Africa" and provide "an example for other parts of Africa in demonstrating the need to find negotiated solutions to political problems".

At the OAU meeting on 3 June, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said the signatories had committed themselves to respecting the fundamental principles for the establishment of a lasting peace in Angola, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, creation of a multiparty democratic system, holding of free, fair and internationally supervised elections, and formation of a new national army.

He appealed to the Angolan parties and to all countries in and even outside the region to work for those objectives.

UNAVEM II

By unanimously adopting resolution 696 (1991) on 30 May, the Council called for the mandate of UNAVEM II to be brought in line with the Accords. The Council approved the Secretary-General's report on UNAVEM *(S/22627 and Add.1)*, asking him to report on further developments.

The Secretary-General stated, among other things, that he expected to report soon to the Council that UNAVEM had successfully fulfilled its mandate as set out in Council resolution 626 (1988), namely to verify the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. He recommended that the Council act to enlarge and prolong the mandate of UNAVEM so it could carry out the new verification tasks arising from the Peace Accords.

The new mandate would be extended until general elections were held in Angola between September and November 1992. Angola had requested the participation of UNAVEM, the Secretary-General said.

Mission tasks included the verification of arrangements agreed by the parties—the Angolan Government and UNITA—for monitoring both the cease-fire and the Angolan police during the cease-fire period.

The Mission would continue to verify the total withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola until its scheduled completion on 1 July 1991.

UNAVEM II would consist of 350 military observers, a group of up to 90 police observers, an air unit consisting of three fixed-wing aircraft and 12 utility helicopters, a 14-member medical unit and a civilian support staff of approximately 80 persons drawn from the UN Secretariat, together with a similar number of locally recruited staff.

On 29 May, the Secretary-General stated that logistical support for UNAVEM must include a reliable communications system and adequate air and ground transportation facilities.

Estimated costs for the Mission for the 18-month period (June 1991 to November 1992), including one-time major procurements of portable shelters, vehicles and communications equipment, were $132.3 million.

The Secretary-General would recommend that the General Assembly deem that costs be borne by Member States.

On 4 June, the Secretary-General reported *(S/22672)* that advance parties of UNAVEM II had been deployed on 2 June. On 6 June, the Secretary-General reported *(S/22678)* that UNAVEM had carried out, fully and effectively, the mandate entrusted to it by the Council in resolution 626 to oversee the withdrawal of Cuban troops. That withdrawal was completed five weeks ahead of schedule, enabling UNAVEM to concentrate all its resources on the new tasks assigned to it.

On 18 June, the Security Council agreed with the Secretary-General's proposal that UNAVEM II's military observer element be composed of contingents from Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Congo, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, India, Ireland, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Senegal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe.

Reuters/Bettmann

Cuban troops had withdrawn completely from Angola by early June.

ANTI-APARTHEID NOTES

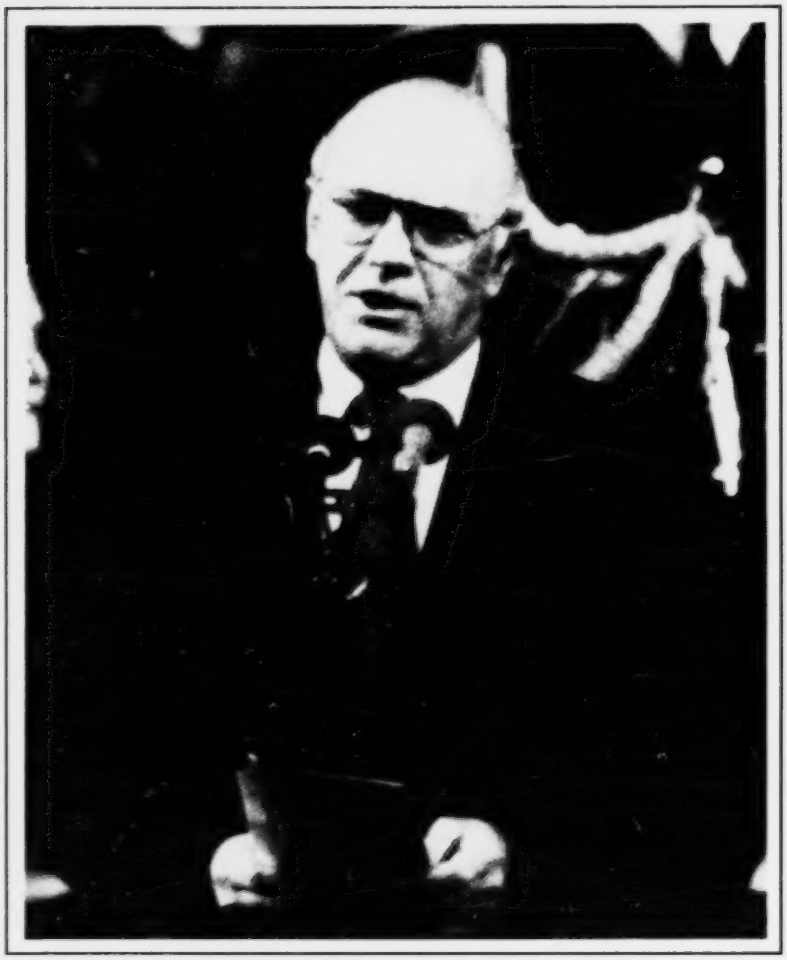
South Africa scraps legal foundation of apartheid system

The law that laid the legal foundation for apartheid, classifying all South Africans by race from birth, was repealed by the South African Parliament on 17 June, more than four decades after it was enacted.

"Now it belongs to history", President F. W. de Klerk said of apartheid, the racially discriminatory system institutionalized by the National Party in 1948. "One cannot build security on injustice", Mr. de Klerk told a joint session of Parliament after the repeal of the Population Registration Act, which leaves the country without a statutory justification for apartheid for the first time in 40 years.

Two weeks earlier, Parliament had scrapped from the books two other legal pillars of the apartheid system: the Land Acts—which set aside 87 per cent of property for whites—and the Group Areas Act, which dictated where people could live on the basis of their race. The Separate Amenities Act, calling for separate accommodations for blacks in many public facilities, was eliminated in June 1990.

The African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) welcomed the repeal of the Population Registration Act in a statement issued on 17 June in Johannesburg, the South African capital, but said little would change "as long as blatantly racist practices continue".



UN Photo 157273/J. Isaac

South African President de Klerk: "Now it belongs to history."

The elimination of the four laws still leaves the black majority without the right to vote. President de Klerk has promised that universal franchise will be extended in a new constitution, and has invited black leaders to join him in drafting one. As an early step, he said, a conference of all political parties will be convened before the end of 1991.

UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar will send a

high-level mission to South Africa during the first half of August to assess the degree of progress in dismantling apartheid. A similar mission visited that country in 1990.

The racial policies of South Africa have been under discussion by the UN since 1946. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council have declared apartheid incompatible with the UN Charter. The Assembly has condemned it as a crime against humanity, and the Council, which has considered the question since 1960, has termed apartheid a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind.

During the 1950s, the Assembly repeatedly appealed, to South Africa to abandon its racial policies. Deploring South Africa's failure to comply, the Assembly in 1962 asked UN Member States to break off diplomatic relations with that country, boycott South African goods, and refrain from all exports. A voluntary arms embargo against South Africa was imposed by the Security Council in 1963.

In 1962 a special Assembly body, known since 1974 as the Special Committee against Apartheid, was established to keep under review South Africa's racial policies.

A new Constitution

President de Klerk told Parliament that a new Constitution had to be framed that would guarantee participation and representation to all South Africans "within a true democracy and with effective protection of minorities". This could be successfully achieved in a matter of a few years through negotiations, he predicted.

"The new South Africa is on the march", he affirmed. "Nothing can stop it any more. The whole process has developed its own dynamics which are greater than the will or recalcitrance of any participant."

New Register of Sports Contacts with South Africa released

Chairman Kofi Awoonor of Ghana

UN Photo 177744/J Isaac

The Special Committee against Apartheid has expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved by all sporting organizations inside South Africa to eliminate apartheid and racial discrimination from sports in that country.

In a 23 April statement, Kofi Awoonor of Ghana, Chairman of the Committee's Subcommittee on the Implementation of UN Resolutions and Collaboration with South Africa, said the Committee looked forward to the day when all South African sportsmen and women, irrespective of colour, race or ethnic origin, would compete in "their free and democratic country" and abroad, and that merit was the only criterion applied in sports.

The statement was made on the occasion of the release of the 1991 Register of Sports Contacts with South Africa, which lists 292 athletes who have participated in sports events in South Africa.

Repatriation of South African refugees, political exiles stalled

Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), on 8 May asked South Africa to clarify its position on amnesty, as well as any other obstacles that prevent UNHCR from beginning a repatriation process for South African refugees and political exiles. UNHCR estimates that about 40,000 South Africans scattered around the world will apply for voluntary repatriation. In March, South Africa agreed, in principle, that UNHCR should participate in the voluntary return of those refugees and exiles.

Measures recommended to meet educational needs of victims of apartheid

The International Conference on the Educational Needs of the Victims of Apartheid in South Africa (25-27 June, Paris) called for support for efforts to restructure South Africa's educational system to provide appropriate opportunities for black South Africans and help facilitate the transition to a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

Sponsored by the Special Committee against Apartheid, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the UN Educational Training Programme for Southern Africa, the Conference recommended a series of measures that could be undertaken by international agencies and educational programmes to meet the educational needs of the victims of apartheid. They included providing resources to address problems such as illiteracy, school drop-outs and the marginalization of women, and assisting in the establishment of a massive programme of adult education.

Disarmament Commission: *Three new items on agenda*

Regional approaches to disarmament, the role of science and technology in the context of international security and the process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of eliminating nuclear weapons, were three new items on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission at its 1991 session (22 April-13 May, New York).

UN Photo 171396/E. Nagata

Commission Chairman Hohenfellner of Austria

According to Commission Chairman Peter Hohenfellner of Austria, since the items were new, "not as much progress had been achieved on these issues as had been hoped". However, particularly because they were "future-oriented" items, the comprehensive discussions that had taken place "would allow more input in forthcoming sessions", he added.

A fourth substantive item which had been considered last year—objective information on military matters—was also reviewed, and major areas of common understanding were identified, with the aim of formulating principles and guidelines for adoption by the Commission.

In 1990, the Commission decided that, beginning this year, it would consider no more than four substantive questions at each session. No subject would remain on the agenda for more than three consecutive years.

The Commission created four working groups to deal with the substantive agenda items.

Working Group I recommended that the UN should promote openness and transparency on military

matters by enhancing its reporting system on military expenditures. General public and interested research institutions should have easy access to objective information in the military field.

Noting that the nuclear dimension of disarmament remained a priority issue in preserving international peace and security, Working Group II decided to continue reviewing the steps taken in the process of nuclear disarmament, as well as the related UN role, with the objective of eliminating nuclear weapons.

Stressing that regional efforts are essential elements in global disarmament, Working Group III pointed out that regional and global approaches complement each other and should be pursued simultaneously.

No less important for international security and disarmament are scientific and technological developments, which were discussed by Working Group IV. In introducing the Group's report, its Chairman said the divergent views expressed had been constructively and cooperatively presented, and the specific questions brought into focus would guide the Commission in its future work.

Session highlights

The conflict in the Gulf area was cited by several speakers as underlining the need for regional approaches to arms control, as well as for efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. It demonstrated that regional and international security were closely interrelated.

Some delegates stressed that the legitimate transfer of high technology to developing countries should be distinguished from moves aimed at preventing the misapplication of advances in science and technology to military ends. In this regard, the Commission should seek to establish acceptable criteria and safeguards for such transfer.

Speakers proposed the creation of nuclear-free zones as a regional contribution to the goal of comprehensive global disarmament. They urged nuclear-weapon States to undertake a step-by-step, balanced reduction of nuclear arsenals, with the ultimate objective of their destruction, and advocated comprehensive approaches to nuclear disarmament.

The trend towards greater openness and transparency should be further consolidated, but objective information on military matters could not be an end in itself. It should be seen as a confidence-building measure designated to promote disarmament and thus contribute to greater security and peace.

Although some new and imaginative approaches were needed, especially with regard to problems of nuclear disarmament, Chairman Hohenfellner, in his closing statement, cited the overall success of the reorganized Commission and called for further elaboration of that process.

Background

The present Commission, a successor to an earlier Disarmament Commission (1952-1965), was established by the General Assembly's first special session on disarmament, held in 1978. It is a subsidiary organ of the Assembly set up to make recommendations on disarmament problems and to follow up on decisions of the special sessions on that question.

In 1988, the Assembly decided to declare the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. In 1990, it approved the Commission's outline for a broad programme for the Decade.

UN Photo 158196/J. Isaac

Regional approaches to arms control are needed. Shown above, ammunition and shells left on a Kuwaiti roadside after the war.

Chemical weapons convention: *Time of high expectations*

Delegates to the Conference on Disarmament, in the wake of a new United States proposal, expressed the belief that an international convention banning chemical weapons may be completed in 1992.

"This is a time of particularly high expectations", said Tessa Solesby of the United Kingdom, Conference President for June, during the second part of the 1991 session (16 May-27 June, Geneva).

On 16 May, the United States had announced it would deal substantively with two key obstacles in the negotiations on a chemical weapons convention.

In a message to the Conference, United States President George Bush said his country would drop its insistence on a right of retaliation with chemical weapons. He also said it would not insist that the United States and certain other countries should keep 2 per cent of their chemical weapons stockpile until all chemical weapons-capable States had signed the convention.

The United States proposed that the convention prohibit the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances. It said it would also commit itself to the destruction of all of its chemical weapons stocks and former production facilities within 10 years of the entry into force of the convention, and assist other States in destroying their weapons.

Welcoming these proposals, delegates stressed that real prerequisites had emerged for a breakthrough in the negotiations. Franz Ceska of Austria favoured intensifying those discussions so that a convention could be completed within 12 months. He added that Austria was willing to serve as host country for the future control organization.

The Soviet Union praised the United States move, stating it was in line with its approach to chemical disarmament issues.

Britt Theorin of Sweden saw "a fundamental change in the negotiating process" that could "contribute to added momentum in the negotiations and a speedy conclusion of the chemical weapons treaty".

Other issues discussed in May and June included: regional arms control measures, including the entry into force of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe; a nuclear-test ban, notably its scope and verification, and prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities; greater transparency in the global arms trade and the establishment of a UN register of arms sales; and strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

Third review conference on biological weapons set for September

The Preparatory Committee for the Third Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which met in Geneva from 8 to 12 April, decided that the forthcoming Conference should take place from 9 to 27 September in Geneva.

The Conference is expected to consider the overall effectiveness of the Convention, including the impact of scientific and technological developments pertaining to the Convention; the relevance of results of negotiations on chemical weapons; and whether further actions are needed to create additional cooperative measures or legally binding improvements to the Convention, or a combination of both.

Two previous Review Conferences were held in Geneva—one in March 1980 and the second in September 1986.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction entered into force on 26 March 1975. It was the first international agreement providing for genuine disarmament, that is the destruction of existing weapons.

UN Space Committee

Consensus reached on draft principles on nuclear power sources

TASS X-28445/O Litvin

Workers in a Soviet space lab.

During its 1991 session (27 May-7 June, Graz, Austria), the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space reached consensus on the text of two draft principles on the safe uses of nuclear power sources in outer space. They deal with responsibility for national activities in outer space, and liability and compensation for damage caused by space objects.

The Committee's Legal Subcommittee is drawing up a set of international principles and guidelines for the use of nuclear power sources, including such issues as notification of the presence of a nuclear power source on board a space object, definition of a launching State, publication of safety assessment reports prior to launch, and guidelines and criteria for safe use of a nuclear power source in outer space.

In its report (*A/46/20*), the Committee urged its Subcommittee to complete the draft principles as soon as possible.

Canada and Germany proposed the text of the two draft principles. By one draft principle, States bear international responsibility for national activities involving the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, whether such activities were carried out by governmental or non-governmental entities. When outer space activities involving the use of nuclear power sources were carried out by an international organization, responsibility would be borne both by the international organization and the participating States.

The draft principle on liability and compensation states that each country which launched or procured the launching of a space object, and each State from whose territory or facility a space object was launched, would be internationally liable for damage caused by such space objects or their component parts. That also applied to objects carrying a nuclear power source on board. Two or more States jointly launching a space object would be jointly and severally liable for damage. Compensation would include reimbursement of expenses for search, recovery and clean-up operations.

A 'rational necessity'

Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock told the Committee that cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, once considered a

moral and political postulate, had become a rational necessity. Times of confrontation in outer space, partly due to recent changes in the world political situation, belonged to the past. National narrowness should be replaced with global generosity, and confrontation with cooperation.

Vasiliy S. Safronchuk, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, said the potential benefits of space activities had not been fully realized for all countries. The exchange of scientific and technical information should be facilitated and technical assistance to developing countries expanded.

Peter Hohenfellner of Austria this year replaced Committee Chairman Peter Jankowitsch, also of Austria, who had served as Chairman for 20 years.

Other issues

The 53-member Outer Space Committee also considered the following subjects:

■ ***The 1992 International Space Year (ISY):*** Agreeing that a good way to broaden and deepen international cooperation in outer space was through international and regional programmes such as the Year, the Committee noted that the UN programme of activities for the Year would focus primarily on the use of space technology for studying and monitoring the global environment.

■ ***Remote sensing:*** The Committee recognized the importance of continuing international efforts to ensure the continuity, compatibility and complementarity of systems for remote sensing of the Earth and to promote cooperation through regular meetings between satellite operators, ground station operators and users. It urged the continuance of free distribution of meteorological information.

■ ***Spin-off benefits:*** The Committee wanted to strengthen international cooperation in the field of spin-off benefits of space technology through improved access to spin-offs that could address the social and economic needs of developing countries. Spin-offs of space technology were yielding substantial benefits in many fields, it noted, and had provided new medical techniques, including those dealing with dry heat sterilization, artificial bone matrix and artificial veins and arteries. Spin-off applications in industry related to quality control systems, dry lubricants, precision machining techniques and consumer electronics.

■ ***Space debris:*** Highlighting the increasing problem of space debris and pollution in outer space, the Committee endorsed the recommendation of its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that further studies be conducted on the problem of collision of nuclear power sources with space debris.

■ ***Geostationary orbit:*** The geostationary orbit—located approximately 22,300 miles above the Equator—is the only orbit capable of providing continuous contact with ground stations via a single satellite. Only a limited number of satellites can use the geostationary orbit because of the problem of radio frequency interference among satellites operating too closely to one another. There is concern that the geostationary orbit could become congested in the near future.

■ ***UN Programme on Space Applications:*** The Committee welcomed the activities undertaken by the Programme in education and training—workshops, training courses, seminars and meetings of experts—and expressed its appreciation to the Governments which had renewed their offers for short- and long-range fellowships. Several members of the Committee again expressed grave concern about the limited financial resources available for the Programme and appealed to Member States to support the Programme through voluntary contributions.

The 1992 theme for the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee is to be: "Space technology and the protection of the Earth's environment: development of endogenous capabilities, in particular in the developing countries and in the context of the International Space Year".

Poland asked that a report on the preservation and protection of the outer space environment, especially activities potentially affecting the Earth environment, be prepared

Space science workshop held

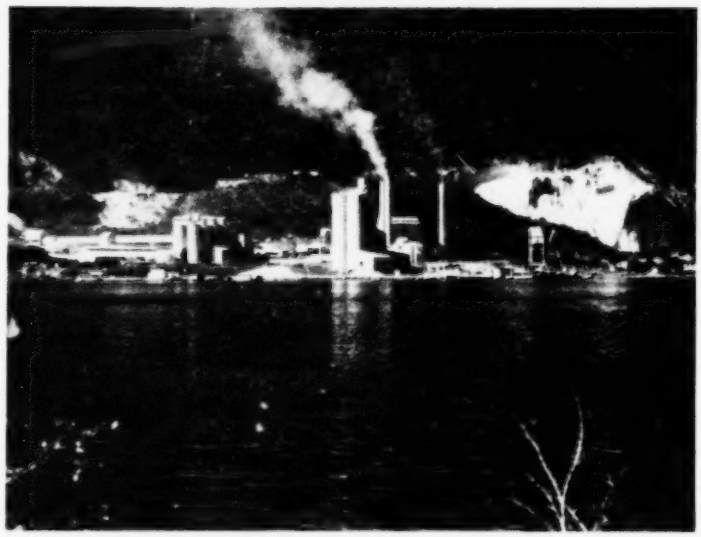
A workshop on basic space science for the benefit of developing countries was held at the headquarters of the Indian Space Research Organization in Bangalore, India, from 30 April to 3 May. Organized by the UN Outer Space Affairs Division in cooperation with the European Space Agency, it was hosted by the Indian Government.

The workshop's programme covered basic space science and development; international cooperation in basic space science; science of the Earth's environment, its atmosphere and space plasma processes; solar system science and planetary exploration; and space astronomy and astrophysics. Participants in the workshop came from Afghanistan, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, Nigeria, Oman, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

TNC Commission focuses on environment and development

Transnational corporations (TNCs) have been urged by the Commission on TNCs to observe international environmental standards and industry-agreed guidelines in their activities.

At its seventeenth session (10-19 April and 7, 10 and 15 May, New York), the Commission also approved a text authorizing the preparation of action-oriented recommendations to encourage and mobilize TNCs and other large enterprises to cooperate in efforts to protect and enhance the environment in all countries. The recommendations will be the Commission's contribution to the landmark UN Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992 in Brazil.



Industry should accept full responsibility for any damage it causes the environment.

UN Photo 126051/WHO/Almasy

The Commission also adopted resolutions on corrupt practices in international business transactions and TNCs operating in South Africa. It considered several reports of the Secretary-General on recent developments related to TNCs and international economic relations.

In debate, many speakers stressed the important role TNCs could play in development and protection of the environment. Peter Hansen, Executive Director of the Centre on Transnational Corporations (CTC), noted that critical global problems, such as environmental deterioration and indebtedness, could not be tackled effectively without recognizing and understanding the role of TNCs.

Policy-makers had to recognize the need for preserving environmental quality in the interest of sustainable development, said Antoine Blanca, Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation. He hoped the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development would encourage them to consider that complex relationship in the interest of environmentally sound economic development.

Delegates pointed out that TNCs should consider their wide-ranging environmental responsibilities, including the "polluter-pays" principle, and accept full liability for any damage to life and property resulting from their activities.

In its omnibus resolution dealing with its contribution to the 1992 Conference, the Commission agreed that among the issues to be addressed should be: observing internationally-agreed standards and

instruments; improving management and regulation of industrial processes; transferring environmentally-sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms; using environment and development accounting and reporting methods; international environmental management, and preventive action and measures to minimize the risks to human life, property and the environment; and the question of reparations for damage.

The Commission requested that the findings of a special TNC research project—"Transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms"—be transmitted to the Conference.

It also stressed the role of governmental and international cooperation in providing an appropriate framework for contributions by TNCs to sustainable development and environment protection.

In discussing its future work, the Commission decided to continue to give particular attention to the environment and to the role TNCs could play in newly-opened economies, as well as in overall global development.

Corrupt practices

In the resolution on corrupt business practices, the Commission asked the Secretary-General to report on UN efforts to address the issue, with the aim of elaborating a draft agreement on illicit payments. Such an agreement would facilitate the establishment of international standards to prevent corrupt practices and enhance fairness and competitiveness in transnational business to benefit the general public. This would also help in negotiations towards a code of conduct on TNCs, which have been under way since 1976.

As attitudes towards direct foreign investment evolved rapidly in Central and Eastern Europe and in developing countries, a comprehensive international code of conduct was needed now more than ever, said the CTC Executive Director.

TNCs in South Africa

Taking note of the evolving situation in South Africa, including the proposed repeal of the major apartheid laws, the Commission reiterated its call on all TNCs to stop immediately any operations in South Africa and all forms of trade and economic links with the racist minority regime. At the same time, it asked the Centre to continue examining possible TNC contributions to the construction of a non-racial democratic South Africa, taking into account the special need to train black South African entrepreneurs.

The international community should, however, maintain vigilance as to the role of TNCs in South Africa in anticipation of a "post-apartheid era", delegates urged. Concern was expressed that widespread denationalization of industries there might ensure that the "heirlooms of apartheid" remained in the hands of the white minority, even after the transition to a multiracial government.

Changing economies

The Commission also focused on policy implications of foreign direct investment and strengthening the negotiating capacity of developing countries in dealing with TNCs.

Other matters considered include: the role of transnational banks; research undertaken by CTC; comprehensive information systems; and international standards of accounting and reporting.

Analysing the changes in the world economy and new patterns in direct investment, some delegates drew attention to such problems as "forced investment" in which bad debt was "swapped for quality assets" and the fact that 97 per cent of technology transfers took place within the "triad"—the United States, the European Economic Community and Japan. One expert adviser noted that "system friction" between triad members was creating regional investment clusters, impeding true globalization.

In its omnibus resolution, the Commission asked for an analysis of recent trends in foreign direct investment in the world economy, as well as an update of the work undertaken by CTC concerning the external indebtedness of developing countries.

The importance of the technical cooperation programme of the Centre to strengthen the negotiating capacity of developing countries was also stressed.

Discussing the present economic conditions in the world, delegates pointed out that policies to improve the climate for business operations had resulted in privatization, reduction or removal of exchange controls, wider currency convertibility, greater repatriation of profits and dividends, and the easing or lifting of price controls.

A growing number of countries utilized investment promotion programmes as a means of attracting export-oriented investment and reduced restrictions on TNC activities.

However, despite these policy changes, flows of foreign direct investment to developing countries had increased only slightly, concentrating in countries with large and growing internal markets, substantial productive resources or geographic proximity to major developed economies.

Trusteeship Council reviews situation in Palau

The Trusteeship Council, suspending its fifty-eighth session on 14 May, unanimously expressed the hope that the people of Palau would be able to complete the process of exercising freely their right to self-determination.

In adopting its conclusions and recommendations without a vote, the Council noted with satisfaction assurances given by the United States, which is the Administering Authority of Palau—the last remaining entity of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands—that it was prepared to assist in any appropriate endeavour leading to the final determination of a political status of Palau, in accordance with the free choice of its people.

During the session, which started on 3 May, the Council considered political, economic, social and educational conditions in Palau. It heard statements by Palauan government officials and petitioners, reviewed written communications and petitions from individuals and groups, and examined the annual report of the Administering Authority for the period ended 30 September 1990.

In a closing statement, Council President Thomas L. Richardson of the United Kingdom said there were some significant discussions on the horizon which could have a crucial impact on the future of Palau.

Other issues on the Council agenda concerned: dissemination of information on the International Trusteeship System; study and training facilities for inhabitants of the remaining Trust Territory; and cooperation with UN bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Special Committee on decolonization.

UN Photo 177755/E Debebe

The Federated States of Micronesia acceded to six treaties on 29 April. Its Ambassador, Jesse B. Marehalau *(centre)*, presenting documents at UN Headquarters.

Petitioner concerns

Concern over the possible consequences of premature termination of the Trusteeship Agreement for Palau was expressed by some petitioners during the session. In addition, criticism of Secretarial Order No. 3142, issued by the United States Department of the Interior in October 1990, was voiced.

The Assistant Secretary for Territorial and International Affairs of the United States Department of the Interior, Stella Guerra, stated that the Order addressed several needs related to the continuing responsibilities of the Administering Authority, including the need for improved fiscal responsibility and a national master development plan to map Palau's economic future. It had been favourably received by the local population, she added.

In debate, the United States assured the Council that its intention was not to force Palau to make a decision regarding its political status, but to create conditions under which Palau could make its own choice.

It would examine proposals from the Government of Palau that could be helpful in gaining support for approval of the Compact. Should these efforts fail, Palau should seriously consider the possibility of independence, it added.

Trusteeship was a transitory status, the United States went on, to enable Palau to move on to the next

stage of its development. Until then, the United States would continue to provide resources and expertise to Palau.

Ngiratkel Etpison, President of Palau, welcomed the Administering Authority's plan for more Department of the Interior personnel in the Territory, but "only in an advisory role and to provide expertise in budgetary and finance matters and in public safety".

The Secretarial Order, which had "usurped existing constitutional-governmental powers", he said, was a "step backward" on the path towards eventual self-government. Palau cherished its alliance with the United States, the fact that its economy was on the rise and that its government institutions were more efficient than ever. However, progress towards economic self-sufficiency was still distant.

Current developments

In its recommendations, the Security Council welcomed Council resolution 683 (1990) of 22 December 1990, terminating the Trusteeship Agreement in respect of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands.

It noted that the leadership of Palau continued to review possible options as to the entity's future political status. It also noted measures taken by the Administering Authority in 1990 to improve its cooperation with Palau.

The Council noted that the people of the Territory had elected to assume full responsibility for administration in the economic, social and educational fields; noted the concerns of the Palau Government regarding economic development and self-sufficiency; and shared the view that continued efforts were needed in that regard.

It welcomed recent reported improvements in the public health, tourism and fisheries sectors, and hoped for further progress in those fields.

The Council also welcomed the consultations between the Administering Authority and Palau towards a master national development plan.

Finally, the Council noted with satisfaction assurances from the Administering Authority that it would continue to fulfil its responsibilities under the UN Charter and under the Trusteeship Agreement. It also noted the United States statement that it had no plans to establish military bases in Palau.

Background

The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands—known as Micronesia—is the last of the original 11 Trust Territories under the International Trusteeship System. Because it was designated as a "strategic area" under the Charter, the Trusteeship Council reports to the Security Council on conditions there.

Trusteeship Council members are China, France, the United Kingdom, the USSR and the United States.

Micronesia consisted of four entities—the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and Palau. In 1983, Compacts of Free Association with the United States were approved for the Federated States of Micronesia and for the Marshall Islands. The Northern Marianas opted for Commonwealth status in 1975.

Palau has yet to determine its future status. By resolution 683, the Security Council terminated the Trusteeship Agreement for the other three entities.

UN Photo 109924/Y. Nagata

A road in Palau.

UNHCR

FACING THE REFUGEE

By Anne-christine d'Adesky

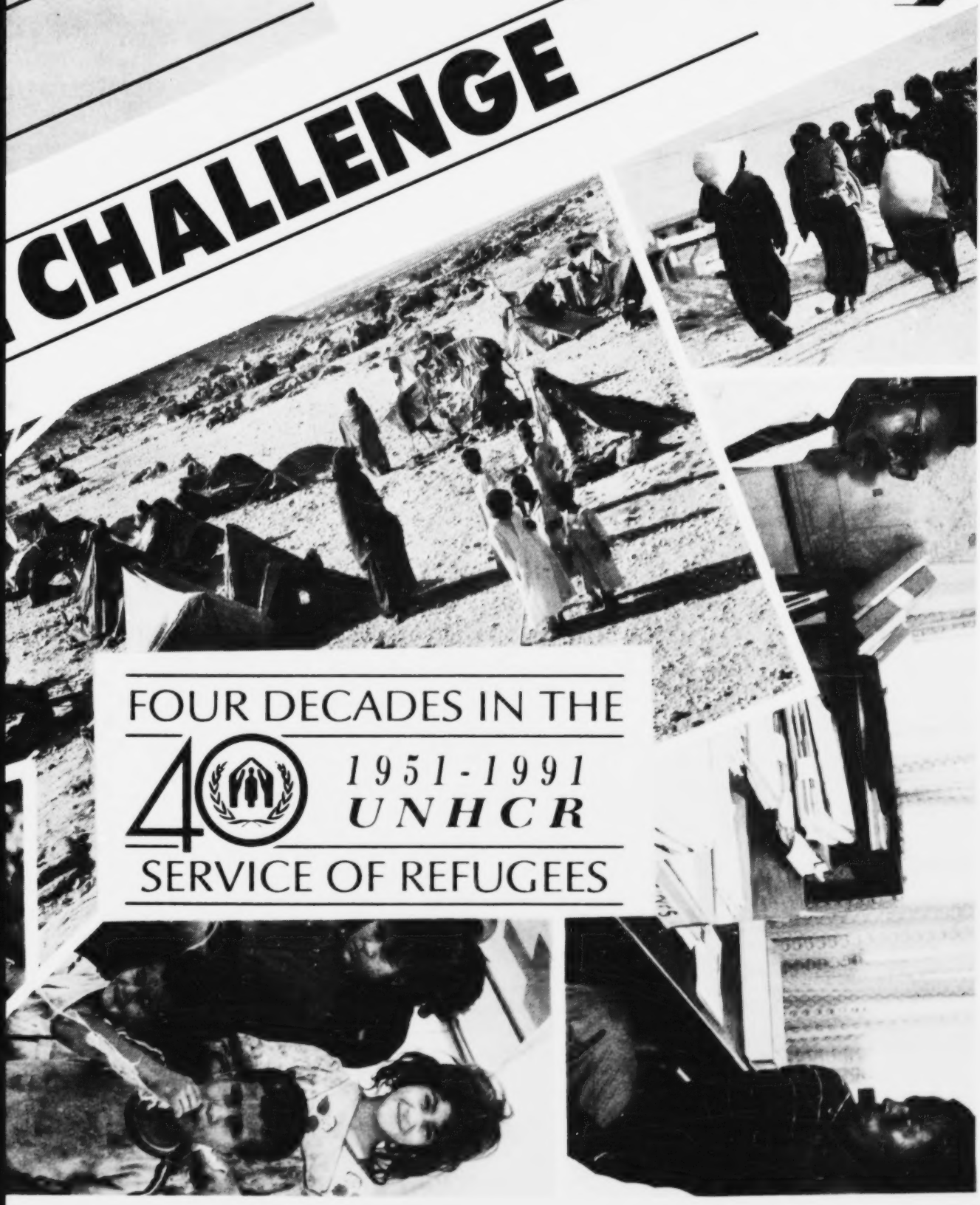
By now, the images have become familiar to all of us: the race across a barbed-wire border on a moonless night; a boat, overcrowded with desperate people, preyed upon by modern-day pirates; cars, piled high with furniture, stuck at an entry point; an overnight city of white tents set against the mountains. There is no corner of the earth where the classic drama of the refugee has not unfolded.

If anything, we are seeing today an unprecedented number of the world's citizens who have been made refugees as a result of civil conflicts, environmental disasters and, increasingly, hunger and poverty. Recently, the end of the cold war has brought Eastern Europeans streaming West, while the Gulf war has displaced hundreds of thousands and left others homeless, their cities destroyed.

For all of these cases, the costs are rising too. Money is needed to feed, clothe and heal those who are often hungry, cold, malnourished and sick—the victims of intense trauma. There is also the growing cost, measured in negative terms, of loss to the country of origin of productive citizens who leave.

Many nations have become hostile to accepting more refugees, as they are already overburdened and unable to adequately care for their own citizens. Racism and xenophobia are on the rise. There is no welcome mat for poor, unskilled refugees. Western Europe hopes to establish a unified border policy by 1992, to cope with—some would say keep out—the influx of refugees from less-developed nations. In many places, the status of refugees remains questionable, with forced repatriation seemingly replacing voluntary repatriation as the dominant policy.

CHALLENGE



FOUR DECADES IN THE

40 1951-1991 UNHCR

SERVICE OF REFUGEES

Following the war in the Persian Gulf area, a new population of "orbit cases"—in this case, twice displaced Palestinian refugees—has been created, posing unique economic and political problems for resettlement officials.

As the scope of the world's refugee problem grows daily, so does the need for increased cooperation among nations to stem, and hopefully reverse, the current global tide of exodus and exile.

This is the key challenge facing the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as it celebrates its fortieth anniversary in 1991. A new High Commissioner, Mrs. Sadako Ogata of Japan, assumed that post in February.

"The problem of refugees has grown not only in size but in complexity, to the point where it truly is a global problem—all nations are affected", said Albert Peters, head of UNHCR's New York Office, in a recent interview.

"More and more, we are moving towards a situation where we have to reckon with the causes that make people become refugees in order to find the ways they can be solved." He added: "Refugee issues are part and parcel of the political world, which is why they must become part of an international political agenda. It is our task to help develop and implement such an agenda."

UN Photo 141348/J Isaac

Vietnamese refugees await resettlement or repatriation in a Hong Kong camp.

The tide of history

Since its creation on 1 January 1951, UNHCR has grown from a small agency helping the refugees of two world wars to become the leading international body, working on behalf of the world's refugees. Today, there are an estimated 17 million refugees, and another 15 million to 25 million displaced persons, most of them women and children *(see page 51)*. UNHCR's achievements have gained worldwide recognition, as well as two Nobel peace prizes—in 1954 and 1981. But more importantly, it has literally saved millions of lives by bringing together donors and their resources to aid those in need on a scale unimagined by its post-war architects.

Today, UNHCR offices and missions have grown to match the increase in world refugees. There is currently a staff of about 2,000, as compared to 99 in 1951. They work at UNHCR headquarters in Geneva and in 100 field offices around the world. The annual budget has increased to nearly $600 million, financed primarily by voluntary contributions from Governments, with private organizations and individuals also contributing. Still, that falls short of what is needed to meet today's needs.

The severe budget crisis of UNHCR has recently been the focus of discussion among the 44 member States of EXCOM, the agency's Executive Committee. In 1989, despite funding pleas to Governments and voluntary agencies, UNHCR had a $35 million shortfall in its general programmes budget of $386.15 million. After a short-lived budget surplus in 1990, UNHCR money needs have skyrocketed this year, in light of the Gulf war and the continuing crisis in the Horn of Africa.

At present, the agency has enough funds to cover 80 per cent of its core programmes, but as High Commissioner Ogata said recently: "Many UNHCR programmes, especially those in Africa, have already been cut to the bone." UNHCR's funding problem, she concluded, "will not go away, and it is a question that will have to be given much more thought".

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also feeling the effects of "donor fatigue". The problem, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) stated last year, was that "Governments have not provided adequate funding to the organization [UNHCR] to allow it to fulfil its fundamental mandate. There is no substitute for government funding".

A humanitarian approach

UNHCR is the offspring of a League of Nations project that began in 1921, when some 1.5 million Russians were stranded in the

aftermath of the First World War. Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen took charge of the refugee effort, coordinating the activities of various voluntary agencies. He later expanded the mission to cover other Eastern European refugee groups, including Armenians, Turks and Assyrians. An innovative director, Mr. Nansen drew up a document called the "Nansen passport", which was signed by 54 countries and gave legal identity to these war refugees.

The Nansen office gave way to the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, created after the Second World War to help repatriate some 7 million persons. When the process resulted in death for many of the 2 million returned to Stalin's labour camps in the Soviet Union, a new solution was demanded by the world community.

The International Refugee Organization was then created in 1947 to resettle, rather than repatriate, the victims of war. This plan ultimately failed though, since countries of asylum also suffering from the consequences of war became unwilling to care for additional refugees.

In 1951, when UNHCR was born, 174,000 persons were living as "long stayers" in refugee camps that were becoming permanent, not temporary, shelters. The majority were orphaned children and the elderly. They were sick, weak and completely dependent on assistance. A better solution was demanded by the world community, one that all could agree upon and that would provide international protection to refugees. This then was the post-war demand that has remained at the heart of UNHCR policy ever since.

The primary mission of UNHCR was to protect and assist refugees. While existing as well as future refugees were included under its mandate, its initial focus was on refugees remaining from the Second World War. Two key UN documents were at the core of the Agency's mandate.

The hallmark 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights established that everyone has the "right to leave one's country and seek and enjoy asylum" (from persecution).

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol set minimum protection standards for refugees. A refugee, the Convention reads, is a person who, "owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside of the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country . . ."

Although important to the protection of refugees, the Universal Declaration stops short of proclaiming the individual's right to enter another country and be granted asylum; it only refers to the right to leave one's country and enjoy asylum. Thus, Governments reluctant to take in refugees have used the wording of the Declaration to argue that they are not mandated to grant asylum.

The 1951 Convention has a similar ambiguity which has been the subject of intense debate. The Convention leaves the concept of "persecution"—the basis for granting asylum—vague. It also upholds the right of Governments to determine who qualifies as a refugee.

Compared to the 27 million people uprooted by the Second World War, today's refugees often fall outside the strict categories of "persecution". If people cannot earn a living because their country is wracked by civil war, are they victims of political persecution? If a natural disaster strikes and area residents flee across a border to safety, do they qualify for the "right of asylum"?

UNHCR's Albert Peters puts it more bluntly: "What one has to fight is some kind of national egoism by nations and Governments who say 'we're interested in helping these people and not those'. What is needed to counter such attitudes", he added, "is a spirit of multiculturalism and unity of purpose".

Unity lacking

Up to now, that unity has been lacking. A 1989 UNHCR study on European asylum practices by Governments noted: "The interpretation of the criteria for granting refugee status and asylum displays almost as many variations as there are countries. In some countries,

UN Photo 45008

A Polish family in 1953, their fifth year in an Austrian refugee camp.

persecution has been defined . . . as a threat to life or freedom, but not in all countries."

Part of the problem lies in history. A February 1991 overview of UNHCR achievements by the New York-based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights concluded that because the Office was created in the cold-war period, it was immediately cast into a political, not strictly humanitarian, role.

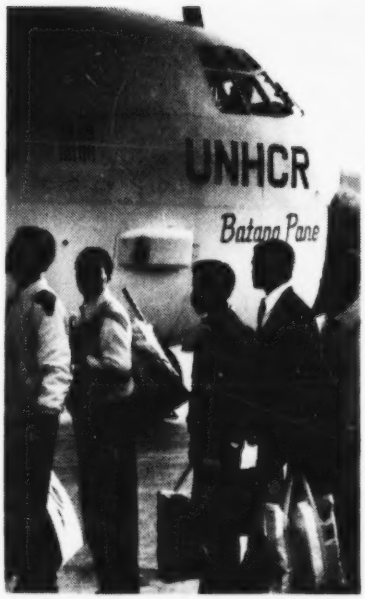
As stated by Richard Smyser, a former UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner: "The Western Governments saw that the harshly ideological States that had assumed power in Central and Eastern Europe during the twentieth century represented danger, not protection, for certain of their citizens. The West wished to make it possible for those unprotected citizens to leave their countries if they could."

As a result, Mr. Smyser concluded, Eastern European nations were wary of UNHCR activities, seeing the agency as a tool of Western capitalism, rather than a humanitarian body.

The historic advent of Soviet "perestroika" and the opening of the East have since dramatically altered the picture, because many of those seeking entry into the West are perceived to be outside the Convention's definition of a refugee. Additionally, the issue of displacement has surfaced due to ethnic civil strife in several countries.

"There are people who are victims of political persecution, but there are also those who fall into the category of victims of economic and environmental disasters", said Mr. Peters. "But the point is that these people have been forced to leave their homes and are in need of assistance and protection."

The same holds true in ravaged Kuwait, where some 400,000 Palestinians lived and worked prior to the Gulf war. These Palestinians fall outside the mandate of another agency, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).



UNHCR/1915c/1989/Lars Astrom

Namibian refugees going home on the eve of independence.

On 4 March, UNRWA reported that some 150,000 Palestinians working in Kuwait had fled to Jordan. High Commissioner Ogata said recently: "As a result of events during the war, we have seen a hardening of attitudes against the Palestinians in some quarters." She termed the situation "very worrying", stating it was especially so for UNHCR, which might be asked to extend its mandate of protection, when it could not financially afford to do so.

A mandate to protect

A key aspect that sets UNHCR apart from other UN or humanitarian agencies is its mandate to provide international protection for refugees. This and the goal of "durable solutions" to their problems are the two main functions of the agency at present.

In 1967, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was supplemented by the UN Refugee Protocol. This document eliminated the time and geographic limitations contained in the 1951 Convention. In other words, the mention of refugees being the "result of events occurring [in Europe] before 1 January 1951" was deleted, thus enlarging the scope of the definition.

UNHCR works to assure that host nations respect international standards for the treatment of refugees in the fields of education, employment, residency, freedom of movement and protection against forced repatriation to their country of origin. To date, 107 nations have agreed to abide by the Convention and its Protocol.

On the legal front, UNHCR officials provide refugees with access to lawyers and social workers, as well as to legal instruments to help them with their asylum claims. The agency also plays the role of a go-between, assisting countries of asylum with refugee cases, as well as countries to which refugees are voluntarily returning. UNHCR field workers interview refugees seeking entry into a host country once they are in camps and, afterwards, when refugees are either resettled or repatriated.

The agency works closely with other UN bodies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme, the UN Development Programme, and the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator, whose programmes provide both emergency relief aid and longer-term development projects to aid refugees.

UNHCR also works with the Geneva-based ICVA and a network of more than 200 NGOs which provide material and field support to refugees.

As the coordinator for international refugee assistance, UNHCR provides basic material assistance in the form of emergency relief, food and medical care, and shelter. Its programmes strive to give refugees jobs and training, education and social services.

Considering that many refugees are victims of trauma and civil conflicts or war, special psychological counselling is often needed, as well as rehabilitation, for those who are disabled. These forms of assistance are geared toward promoting self-sufficiency, rather than the long-term dependency created in Second World War refugee camps.

The goal of self-sufficiency

"The problem of a camp, we have learned, is that people become victims of assistance and cannot have a normal life there", stated Santiago Romero-Pérez, UNHCR Deputy Representative in New York. "That's a continuation of the social missionary approach that sees people as objects of assistance, rather than agents of self-determination. That is why the goal of self-sufficiency is so important, and why we are now seeking to integrate refugee issues with those of national development."

As Mr. Romero-Pérez explained: "The longer the period of instability resulting from extended periods in camps, the more difficult it is for refugees" to either integrate into their host countries or return home—if home still exists. Hence, in situations of drawn-out or chronic conflicts, where voluntary repatriation is impossible, it is preferable to try to integrate refugees locally and avoid creating dependent "victims of assistance".

Such a goal is hardly easy, however, given the increasing numbers of refugees. While Western European nations and the United States have steadily expanded their immigration quotas for refugees, political developments have outstripped this pace. Recent pressing refugee problems include the plight of the Kurds and Palestinians, the Tamil problem and chronic migrations in the Horn of Africa, Sudan and Ethiopia.

In the early 1970s, for example, some 13,000 asylum seekers entered Western Europe, many of them from the East. The majority was recognized as refugees. This year, some 450,000 people are expected to apply for asylum in Western Europe, an astonishing increase.

"Fifty per cent of these people come from the Third World, and less than 20 per cent are going to be recognized as refugees", said Michel Moussalli, UNHCR Director of International Protection, referring to the exodus from nations south and east to those north and west.

While many of these new refugees cannot claim asylum based on "persecution" as defined by the 1951 Convention, they are still fleeing. Mr. Moussalli declared recently: "If the international community is confronted with a flow of destitute persons, massive economic, social and development aid should be made available to enable the country of origin to offer satisfactory living conditions to its citizens."

Mr. Moussalli added that, as it stands today, "the immigration doors are closed in most countries to economic migrants. Thus, they clog up the asylum procedures which cannot function normally any longer." Such a back-up may aid some refugees who are able to stay in the relatively safe limbo of a pending asylum claim for up to two years. But the longer-term costs are high for all concerned.

While the official doors have closed, "unofficial ones remain open, and contribute to a new form of exploitation of foreign labour", he explained. "Many persons have been used below the standards without any protection." In Western Europe, that exploitation has also been accompanied by xenophobia and racial attacks on new migrants by citizens.

In January 1991, the first colloquium on European Community (EC) refugee policy was held in Brussels with the goal of outlining how the 12 European States can work together to address the refu-

UNHCR/15063/1986/Marc Vanappelghem

Arriving at a Sudanese camp in 1985.

gee crisis. The question at stake, said EC Parliament President Enrique Barón Crespo in an opening address, is: "Will the EC become a fortress or a region of asylum?"

For the moment, some hope lies in the very region that has for so long produced refugees—Eastern Europe. UNHCR officials are now conducting training courses for immigration officials there.

"There are countries of asylum that have made it clear they've reached their limit", said Mr. Peters. "Since there is no way we can coerce them, we have to look at the national interests [of developing countries]." As he explained: "What we ought to do is give the developing countries a chance and the means to develop their own resources so as to limit unnecessary departures to a minimum."

A durable solution

Last year, Deputy High Commissioner Douglas Stafford told the UNHCR Executive Committee: "Our limited resources mean we have missed chances to implement voluntary repatriation programmes." His remarks addressed the critical juncture at which UNHCR now finds itself. In the past, the goal of resettlement was pushed. But now, with the lines blurred between political and economic refugees and the closure of borders, more emphasis is given to voluntary repatriation.

"What we strive for is a real solution—a durable solution", explained Mr. Romero-Pérez. "While the goal is to help the refugees settle, the first issue is one of safety—the international protection—of the refugees." He added: "That is often a difficult thing to gauge. We at UNHCR support the return of refugees if their safety can be assured by their country of origin, but that's not always the case. Ultimately, it should be a decision made by the refugees themselves."

Even when it is safe, the root economic conditions that caused migration and internal displacement remain. That is the new area where UNHCR is working closely with development agencies.

"Assistance must be given to the developing countries to build up their resources so that people won't be forced to leave", said Mr. Peters, who stressed that the traditional countries of asylum "must commit themselves to this goal which ultimately will benefit them in terms of fewer refugees".

Toward that end, UNHCR and UNDP have initiated several joint programmes aimed at self-sustaining development and improved living conditions. These include the Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America (PRODERE), which was launched in 1990 to aid some 440,000 beneficiaries, with full financing by the Italian Government.

PRODERE is one of 59 joint UNDP/UNHCR projects that are part of the Plan of Action, adopted at the UN-sponsored International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA), held in Guatemala City in May 1988. A total of $156.2 million has been pledged to the CIREFCA Plan. "UNDP becomes involved because displacement of any significance poses serious threats to development", said UNDP Administrator William Draper regarding the emergent UNDP/UNHCR policy.

"UNHCR is not a development agency, but we should act as an advocate of development assistance", said Mrs. Ogata. "If you want to prevent new refugee situations, then development is indispensable."

What does the future hold for UNHCR and the refugee populations it seeks to serve? "The situation today is very serious", said Mr. Peters. "What is needed now is political will and a real commitment on the part of nations that have yet to follow through in terms of resources and money. Without that, we're headed for disasters of unparalled proportions. We at UNHCR are doing all that we can. But the refugee problem belongs to the whole world."

UNHCR/14102/1984/Didier Bregnard

Thousands of Guatemalans fled to Mexico in the early 1980s because of political violence at home.

The Gulf: *5 million and counting . . .*

It has been termed the "fastest growing refugee situation in modern history", and it does not take a historian to see that the present crisis in the Gulf region has produced an unprecedented human exodus.

UNHCR/21015/91/A. Hollmann

Iraqi refugees at Turkish border.

In terms of size, scope and speed of migration, as well as widespread death and suffering, the Gulf refugee crisis is unique. It has presented an enormous challenge to the world community to provide emergency money and supplies, as well as manpower, resources and, particularly, international commitment and cooperation to deliver relief across mountains, deserts and land-mined terrains.

To date, the key role played by the UN and its relief agencies, working in concert with scores of Governments and private voluntary agencies, has saved tens of thousands of lives. Yet, even with such international cooperation, the present Gulf situation remains frighteningly grim.

"In human, economic and social terms, the devastation resulting from the war and the displacement of large numbers of people in the civil conflict which followed is incalculable", said Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the Secretary General's Executive Delegate to coordinate the UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme for Iraq, Kuwait and Iraq's border areas, assessing the refugee crisis in mid-May.

Moreover, a grave shortage of funds exists for the thrice-updated UN Regional Humanitarian Plan of Action relating to the Crisis between Iraq and Kuwait, budgeted in mid-June 1991 at $448.9 million for four months of operations.

At that time, only a third of that amount had been pledged by donor nations, in spite of dire predictions of famine, disease and new migration. While new pledges of $80 million were made by donor nations on 12 June, the funding shortfall was still considered to be "alarming".

The overall picture

Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, some 5 million persons from 30 countries have been temporarily or permanently displaced. Hundreds of thousands more remain internally displaced inside Iraq and Kuwait, their homes and cities destroyed and devastated during the Gulf war and its aftermath.

Following the 18 April Memorandum of Understanding between Iraq and the UN, a mass voluntary repatriation effort has begun, involving some 1.5 million refugees, mainly Iraqi Kurds, now living in temporary camps along the border with Turkey and in Iran. During that time, thousands of Kurds, mostly women and children, were reported to have died of starvation and exposure. In some areas, 800 fell victim daily to malnutrition and disease.

International relief officials in mid-June warned that health conditions there remained serious, making voluntary repatriation more difficult. Several epidemics, including cholera and measles, have broken out in Iraq and Kuwait due to the damage to the basic health and sanitation infrastructure.

Women and children, often comprising 80 per cent of some refugee populations, are especially vulnerable. Without massive immunization programmes, they may die from common but deadly diseases. Without immediate relief, UN officials fear for a further migration from the south of Iraq by mostly Shiite Moslems.

An environmental catastrophe in Kuwait caused by massive numbers of burning oil wells and a gigantic oil spill into the Gulf waters also threaten the health of residents, as well as the country's ability to feed itself. The fires darken daytime skies, polluting the air and killing wildlife. This year's harvest in Iraq will most probably be lost.

Such severe problems are compounded by complicated political realities, which affect the mass repatriation plan for 1.5 million Kurds and 300,000 Shiites living near Iraq's Turkish and Iranian borders.

Many Kurds are reported to be wary of returning to hunger, bombed-out villages and the spectre of civil unrest. "Refugees, including the Kurds, will not go back unless there is something to go back to", Sadruddin Aga Khan warned on 15 May.

The UN estimates that large numbers of refugees could remain in Iran and that between 20,000 to 50,000 could remain on the Iraq/Turkey border. "To ensure the safety and well-being of refugees who are unwilling to repatriate, at least immediately, new sites must be established or existing camps significantly upgraded to provide better conditions for temporary asylum", Sadruddin Aga Khan further reported.

He added: "Given the rapidity of developments, and the over-riding preoccupation amongst refugees that their safety be assured upon return to Iraq, it is difficult to predict the overall pattern of repatriation of the Iraqi refugees. Although no such assurances of safety can be given at this point in time, it is evident that the hopes of many refugees have been raised."

Another thorny issue is the homeless status of thousands of Palestinians working in Kuwait prior to the invasion who are unable to re-enter the country. Without homes or the protection of a Government, this group now comes under the legal protection mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). They must be "considered as refugees under UNHCR's mandate if they are in need of international protection", High Commissioner Sadako Ogata declared in April.

"We're going to be in a state of emergency for a very long time," said Alfredo Witschi-Cestari, a senior UNHCR official in Geneva.

UN Photo 158325/J Isaac

Erik Suy meets with Iraqi officials and civilians at Sulaymaniyah.

Early success

A logistical nightmare for relief workers in the Gulf area is the mixed identity and status of displaced persons. Before the war, there were 3 million foreign "guest workers" in Kuwait and Iraq, including more than 1 million Yemenis, 700,000 Egyptians, 67,600 Pakistanis, 85,000 Bangladeshis, 85,000 Sri Lankans, 150,000 Indians and 30,000 Filipinos. Other workers were from the Sudan, Indo-China and, in smaller numbers, Europe and America. Many were forced to flee under attack, leaving behind possessions and identity papers.

The Gulf migration took place in three waves from August 1990 to May 1991. The first phase took place immediately following the 2 August invasion, causing a mass exodus of foreign nationals into Jordan.

Following a Jordanian request for help, UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar on 29 August designated the UN Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) to coordinate UN relief efforts, in cooperation with UNHCR and other agencies, notably the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

UN Photo 116235

By mid-September, 40 IOM flights were evacuating more than 8,000 people daily from Jordan to their countries of origin. In all, 700,000 nationals from 10 countries were repatriated in a logistical operation facilitated by Jordan. The operation's success was due in part to up-front cash funding from Jordan, which quickly established a centralized system and allowed host agencies like the Jordanian Red Crescent to work with UNHCR, UNDRO and the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as with foreign Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

By early October 1990, nine transit camps were established in Jordan, housing some 68,000 people every day. Meanwhile, other UN agencies such as the World Health Organization, the UN Children's Fund, the UN Development Programme, the UN Volunteers, the World Food Programme, and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were involved in the work, along with 37 NGOs.

The second wave

Relief officials were prepared when a second migration from Iraq began on 17 January, the day hostilities were launched. Revamping their regional plan, UNDRO made an appeal on 11 January for $38 million to feed and shelter 400,000 refugees in temporary camps in Syria, Turkey, Iran and Jordan, and then repatriate them.

The world responded and, within days, several camps with three months' supplies were in place. More significantly, a far smaller number of people—only 65,000—left Iraq over the next three months, including 35,000 Iraqis who crossed the border into Iran.

"At first sight, the situation looks reasonably positive", UNHCR *Refugees* magazine editor Annick Roulet stated, summing up the optimistic forecast of relief officials at that time. Given the fragile nature of the situation, she noted cautiously: "Even the best-laid plans are apt to prove inadequate in such exceptional circumstances, as everyone involved in this vast humanitarian operation is all too well aware".

The Kurdish exodus

What no one anticipated was the Kurdish civil strife, which took place just after the end of the war.

On 5 April, UNDRO launched an emergency appeal for $137 million to help Iraqi Kurds fleeing towards the mountainous Turkish border, unreachable by car. As temperatures dropped, their numbers tripled within days, swamping relief efforts and resulting in many casualties.

In New York, the Security Council, in adopting resolution 688 (1991), demanded that Iraq immediately end the repression of civilians, particularly in Kurdish-populated areas, and insisted that Iraq allow international humanitarian organizations immediate access to all in need of assistance.

By 9 April, UNDRO had updated its plan and budget, requesting a total of $400.2 million to assist 1.5 million refugees. Of this, $238.5 million were needed by UNHCR to cover their most urgent needs.

The plan now outlined a bleak future for the Kurds: "In view of the presence of 1.1 million Iraqi nationals in Iran and on the Turkish border region, donors are requested to give urgent priority to immediate contributions for at least 75 per cent of the total appeal." The situation had become a "refugee" emergency, it was reported. The needs are "extremely urgent and demand immediate action".

Following a tour of the area, High Commissioner Ogata, visibly moved by what she saw, told reporters that the challenge was to respond "in equal measure to this humanitarian crisis".

UNHCR officials in Iran expressed grave concern about their ability to help, stating: "Relief efforts lack nearly all essentials and it is difficult to keep pace with the need, though help is on its way."

UN Photo 158317/J. Isaac

Kurdish woman and child.

UNRWA 82882/G. Nehmeh

Palestinians at an UNRWA facility.

A surprise move

On 16 April, the United States announced that it would send 10,000 American troops to build and protect refugee camps for the Kurds in northern Iraq.

Iraq rejected the United States move as an "unfounded attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq". The United States responded that only it and its coalition partners had the logistical capability to establish the camps.

On 18 April, Iraq and the UN signed an agreement to set up "humanitarian centres" in both north and south.

The Memorandum of Understanding, signed in Baghdad by Executive Delegate Sadruddin Aga Khan and Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein, committed Iraq to "facilitate the safe passage of emergency relief commodities throughout the country". Iraq also agreed to a UN humanitarian presence on its soil, "wherever such presence may be needed". A subsequent agreement was reached on 25 May regarding deployment of a 500-strong UN guard contingent in Iraq.

The unarmed UN guards would act as "moral witnesses" to inspire confidence to the refugees, said Sadruddin Aga Khan.

UNHCR took control of the refugee camp set up by allied forces in Zakho, northern Iraq, on 13 May.

By mid-June, the UN repatriation effort showed signs of working. Thousands of Kurds were returning home to Iraq, although many expressed doubts about their safety.

On 26 June, High Commissioner Ogata reached an agreement with the United States to enable American troops to remain temporarily in northern Iraq to guarantee security to the Kurds "until the situation becomes less fragile".

The repatriation of the Kurds is only one part of the complex political picture that marks the Gulf refugee crisis. The plight of the Palestinians who formerly lived in Kuwait appears even harder to resolve quickly. Mrs. Ogata has said that their situation "is now very worrying. As a result of events during the war, we have seen a hardening of attitudes against the Palestinians in some quarters".

Dire predictions

There can be no disputing the alarming prognosis for the millions displaced by the Gulf War and its aftermath.

A mission to Iraq led by Sadruddin Aga Khan in July found "widespread and severe malnutrition among children there and an increase in cholera and typhoid". Most hospitals were partially dependent on generators. Two thirds of the generators in hospitals visited by the mission were out of order.

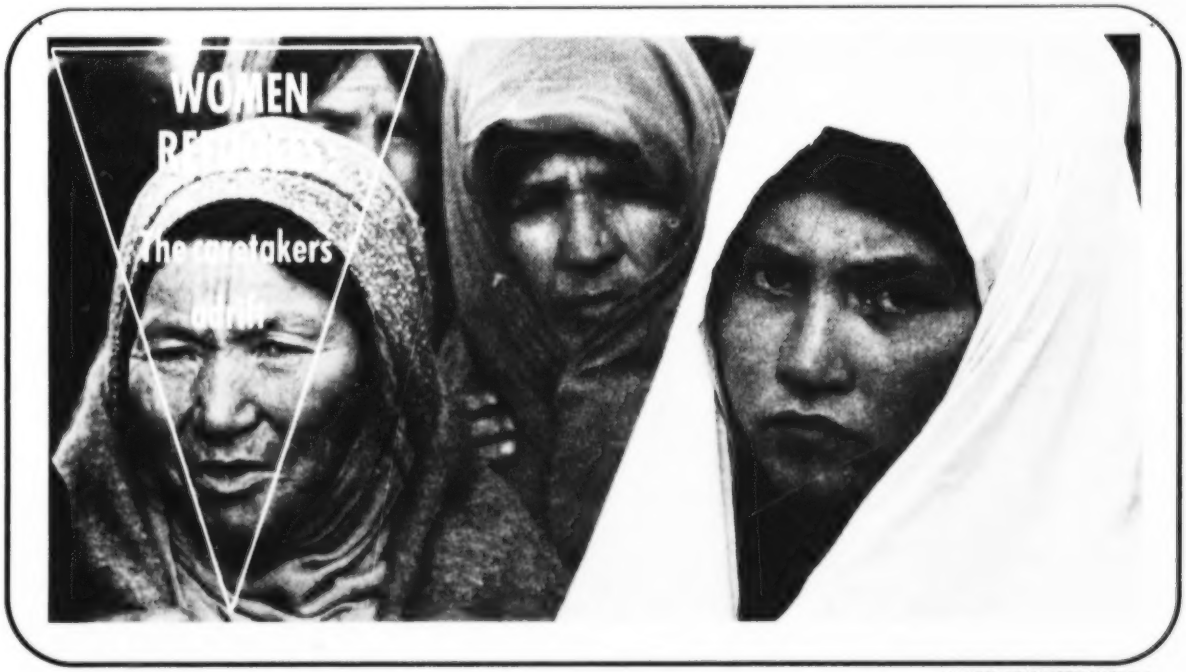
A Harvard University report on public health conditions inside post-war Iraq issued on 22 May projected that some 170,000 Iraqi children under five years of age "will die in the coming year from the delayed effects of the Gulf crisis". That figure represented a 100 per cent increase in infant and child mortality in Iraq.

The report also predicted a "public health catastrophe", with a high possibility of famine. Epidemics of cholera, typhoid and gastroenteritis were considered likely to increase during the summer.

Destruction of electrical power supplies in Iraq was linked to lack of public health and sanitation. "Without electricity, water cannot be purified, sewage cannot be treated, water-borne diseases flourish and hospitals cannot cure treatable illness", the Harvard report stated.

"Iraq must embark on its reconstruction on a stable basis, or else the world community will be responsible for the fate of 18 million people, and it will be unable to do this on a long-term basis", Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said on 12 June. The Security Council sanctions imposed on Iraq must be reconciled with the necessary humanitarian assistance, he added.

"As we can see, the situation inside Iraq is very serious", said Philippe Boullé, head of the UNDRO office in New York. "There has been some improvement, with the Kurds especially. But we are in a critical phase and the money is not coming quickly enough. The situation remains quite overwhelming."



UNHCR/16046/1986/A Hollmann

Over the past decade, stories of sexual abuse and battery, as well as economic exploitation and discrimination, have led refugee officials to regard women as the newest class of asylum seekers who require special attention.

Today, 75 per cent of the world's 15 million refugees are women and children, including a large number of single mothers with several children. Women may arrive in resettlement camps suffering from extreme emotional trauma due to rape by sea pirates or border guards, as well as the loss of husbands and loved ones during their flight to safety.

As refugees, they must undertake the task of feeding and caring for their children as well as themselves. Since many refugee women are illiterate, unskilled and destitute, they face even greater hurdles than men in seeking gainful employment.

"The situation of refugee women is extremely complex", said Ann Brazeau, Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in a recent interview. "Once these women become refugees, they lose the protection they had as citizens. Before, in the social sense, they were protected by their communities. But that social protection may breake down once they cross the border."

At the same time, she added: "It's important that we regard women as capable of making decisions on their own behalf and not as victims who are dependent in that sense. That's the kind of thinking we try to promote in our programmes."

In the lingo of refugee work, the need to offer protection to refugee women while promoting self-sufficiency is termed "gender parity". In a nutshell, it means integrating women in every step of the asylum process, while taking concrete steps to lessen the threat and impact of violence. It also means educating and training government and agency officials to become more sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of refugee women.

"When you talk about integration, you have to look at the traditional role women play, as caretakers, as the ones in charge of food production and water, etcetera", explained Ms. Brazeau. "If you don't have women involved in food distribution, for example, you'll end up having a potentially exploitative situation", she added. "If you don't design programmes that take the role of women into account as well as their needs, you'll end up having a negative impact on women instead of a positive one."

Such thinking is at the heart of current UNHCR policy towards refugee women, in itself the product of years of refining an approach to improve their plight. A major effort to focus on the status of refugee women occurred in 1985, when the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women was adopted at the International Conference on Women in Kenya. There, UN and non-governmental agencies met with local women's groups and refugee women to discuss a global plan to provide international protection against violence for refugee women.

In 1987, the UNHCR Executive Committee highlighted the need

for international guidelines to improve the protection of refugee women and called for a greater commitment by UN Member States to increase the participation of women refugees in all areas that affected them.

By then, it was already clear to officials that the special needs of women were still being neglected in the areas of education, health, physical safety, social services, skills training, employment and income-generating projects.

The needs of long-term refugees, as well as displaced women, also require special attention. Here, the task often overlaps with development projects. For that reason, UNHCR and other refugee assistance agencies now work closely with such UN bodies as UNDP, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Children's Fund, among others. Other agencies such as the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women have gathered data helpful in monitoring the implementation of programmes aimed at helping women.

"UNHCR has taken the essential steps needed to ensure that its activities are tailored to the specific needs of women", said High Commissioner Ogata. "We must now apply them in the most effective way possible."

In practical terms, UNHCR refugee programmes may now include psychological counselling for victims of rape and other sexual abuse, women's literacy and a variety of income-generating projects for female heads of household. These include credit schemes and small businesses which are culturally sensitive and take into account the daily work already being done by refugee women.

Since the majority of women in the developing world are responsible for gathering water, they receive training in water-borne health hazards and in the maintenance of

UN Photo 158317/Saad

wells and other pumping systems. Similar training efforts have been directed to the areas of preventive health and energy conservation.

UN and voluntary agency staff have been trained to deal with issues of rape and battery, since women who are victims of such abuse are often reluctant to admit it.

"We have to implement programmes that provide for viable durable solutions for refugee women", said Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the UNFPA.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a critical role in promoting the concept of gender parity and self-sufficiency programmes for women. In the wake of the Nairobi Conference, an NGO Working Group on Refugee Women was formed in 1986 to establish programme guidelines in the areas of protection, health, cultural adjustment, education and income-generation development. The guidelines were seen as particularly necessary, given the fact that even when refugee women had access to programmes, they were often unable to use them.

According to Elizabeth Ferris, former Secretary of the NGO Working Group, women participated comparatively less than men in income-generating projects, legal counselling, agricultural projects and vocational training.

"The reason given for the lower levels of participation are remarkably similar in all regions: the lack of child care and/or transportation; inconvenient scheduling of activities; too much work at home; lack of support by family members; and programmes which are seen as irrelevant to women", Mrs. Ferris said.

Towards that end, the Group has worked closely with UNHCR, Governments and, most importantly, with refugee women to see that programmes aimed at women consider child care, for example, as a fundamental part of any self-sufficiency programme.

That does not mean the battle has been won. As UNHCR Coordinator Brazeau remarked: "We still encounter a lot of resistance by those people who consider women's issues to be the soft side of refugee work—the social and economic issues that impact on women. We still need to see a change in mentality."

"Women refugees should be encouraged to become self-sufficient", said Ms. Brazeau. "We need to make resources available to them, to ensure that they develop new skills. We must listen to what they say. They know what they need."

Fresh hope in South-East Asia

The date 14 June 1989 marked a major turning point in the history of South-East Asia, as well as international refugee policy. It was then that the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for Indo-Chinese refugees was adopted, establishing a legal framework to address the problem of refugees and asylum seekers from Viet Nam and Laos.

Earlier, on 18 December 1988, Viet Nam and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) signed an agreement in Geneva ensuring that the "boat people" of Viet Nam would not be prosecuted if they returned to their own country. That was the first step in what has since become a model voluntary repatriation effort in the entire region.

Over the past 15 years, 2 million people have left the Indo-Chinese peninsula, with more than half resettling in richer northern countries. Many were resettled directly in the United States, Western Europe and other developed countries under the Orderly Departure Programme (ODP) that was begun in May 1979 to stem the dangerous flight of boat people who often fell prey to pirates.

The ODP offered a safe, organized way for Vietnamese citizens, including former South Vietnamese soldiers, to leave their homeland. Camps in Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines were seen as way stations for asylum seekers, allaying the concerns of regional nations overburdened with refugees.

By late 1988, the situation in Viet Nam had changed. The Vietnamese Government's promise to protect and assist returnees laid the foundation for the new CPA policy of voluntary repatriation.

The CPA entailed a series of interrelated measures designed to encourage safe, organized departures to resettlement countries, discourage activities leading to clandestine departures and offer temporary asylum for all who sought it, pending determination of their status as refugees.

It also established a system of region-wide "screening" of new arrivals from Viet Nam.

Those who failed to qualify for resettlement as refugees were encouraged to return home with financial assistance from the international community. However, many still remain in camps.

"The agreement with Viet Nam marks an important turning point in the Vietnamese exodus", said Michel Moussalli, head of the UNHCR Division of International Protection. "It gives a framework for the international community to provide assistance, by working in cooperation with Governments in the region."

UNHCR has access to all returnees in Viet Nam and Laos and assists and monitors their reintegration. The European Community is funding a bilateral programme in Viet Nam to improve the economic conditions in certain areas from which large numbers of asylum-seekers have departed.

To date, the number of departures under the ODP and similar arrangements has steadily increased—from 21,000 in 1988 to more than 57,000 in 1990. This year, some 100,000 Indo-Chinese refugees are expected to resettle in the United States, Australia, Canada and France, among other nations.

At the same time, the arrival by boat of Vietnamese asylum-seekers in the region has diminished from 72,783 in 1989 to 30,930 in 1990. During the first six months of 1991,

UNHCR/18142/11.1988/A. Hollmann

Laotian hilltribe refugees in Thailand.

a total of 14,640 were reported. Over 11,000 Vietnamese have voluntarily returned to Viet Nam from countries of first asylum since the CPA was agreed upon.

Despite this obvious success, some 500,000 Indo-Chinese still remain in camps throughout South-East Asia. Compared to two years ago, the Vietnamese camp population has jumped from 70,000 to 110,000. Just inside Thailand, the number of Cambodians in camps has grown to 350,000.

Some 65,000 Laotians, mostly from the Hmong tribe, are also in Thai camps, and 4,000 are in China. That number does not include those who have been displaced inside Indo-China.

The Laotian part of the CPA was significantly boosted in June 1991 when a plan for the phased repatriation and reintegration of Laotians now in Thailand was endorsed at a meeting between UNHCR and both Governments in the ancient Laotian royal city of Luang Prabang. A similar agreement regarding Laotian refugees in China was subsequently reached by UNHCR and the Governments of Laos and China.

The main goal of the plan approved in Luang Prabang is to expand immediately the capacity of Laos to receive returnees.

The Laotian programme will include information campaigns, visits to reintegration sites by refugee representatives, more assistance to returnees and increased UNHCR monitoring capacity. The Laotian Government has reiterated its amnesty for returnees, first declared in 1977.

The Laos repatriation programme, in place since 1980, so far has helped over 7,000 Laotians return to their home country from Thailand, where they had sought asylum.

The June agreements come at a time when interest in voluntary repatriation is increasing among Laotians in Thai camps and among those living on state farms in the Chinese province of Yunnan.

Today, there are an estimated 350,000 Cambodians living in camps along the Thai border. With the signing of a cease-fire on 26 June 1991, there is now renewed hope for a peace settlement in Cambodia that would give new impetus to voluntary repatriation.

A framework for the orderly return of the Cambodian refugees was agreeed upon by the UN Security Council in November 1990. UNHCR officials have been working on a massive voluntary repatriation plan.

Prior to launching the operation, border areas and resettlement sites will have to be de-mined, and reception areas, transport routes and bridges will have to be readied. Stockpiling of food and relief supplies is another urgent task.

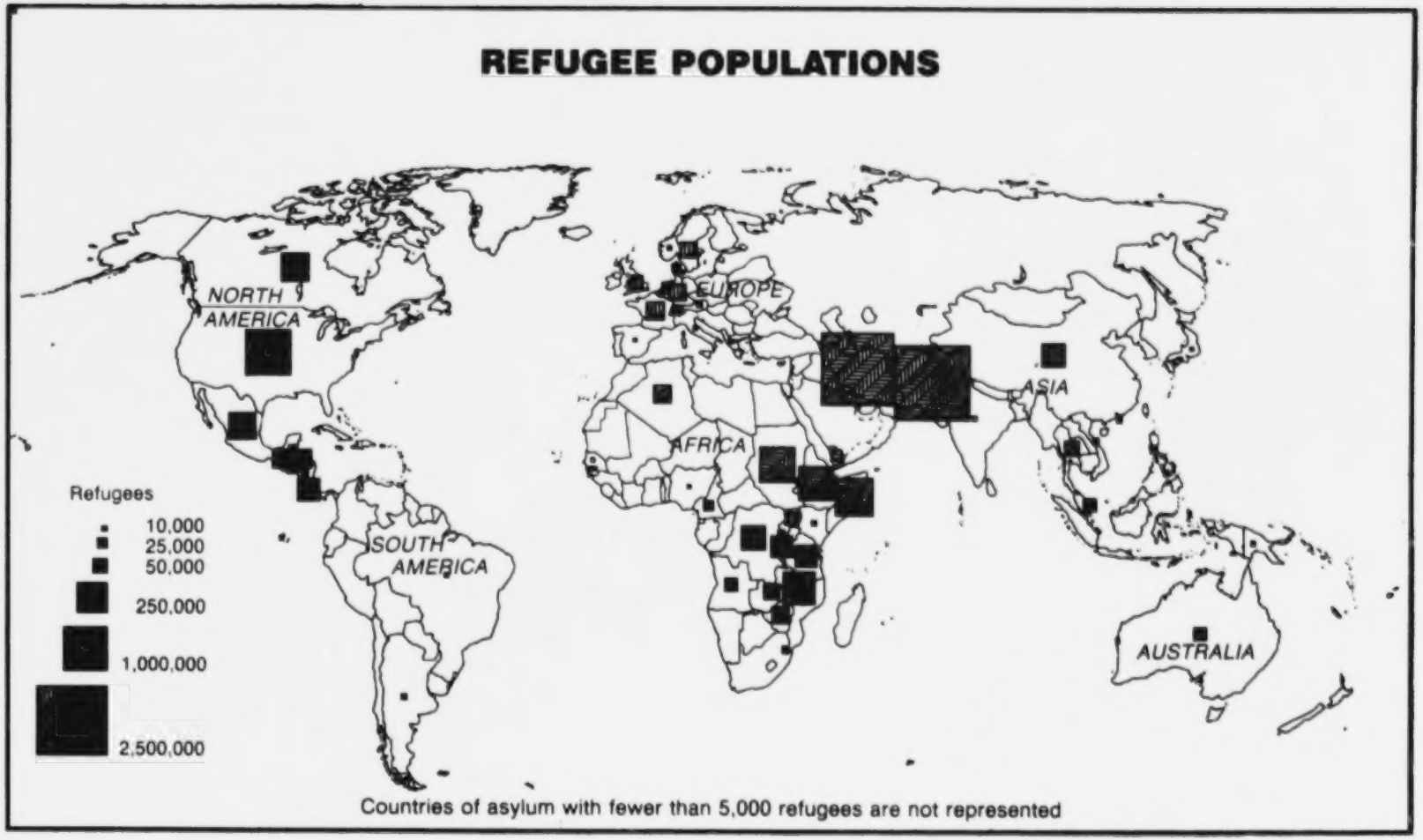
A massive operation

In anticipation of a peace agreement in Cambodia, UNHCR is stepping up its registration and information drive in camps along the Thai-Cambodian border. Preparations for the massive repatriation operation are expected to cost some $33 million, of which $9 million have already been pledged. But many obstacles must be overcome before large-scale repatriation can be launched. For example, Cambodia must develop its reception capability. Satellite images of possible settlement sites for the returnees have been taken recently.

Protection for the returnees also must be ensured. "The issue of protection is important in Indo-China", said Mr. Moussalli. "My hope is that there will be a positive solution to the refugee problem of Cambodians. The example of Viet Nam shows that repatriation can work. Again, there will have to be a guarantee for their safety". Looking ahead, he is cautiously optimistic: "I cannot help but feel this situation must come to a solution. How soon, no one can say."

UNHCR/8194/1978/Kaspar Gaugler

Vietnamese "boat people" arriving in Malaysia, 1978.


REFUGEE POPULATIONS
NORTH AMERICA
EUROPE
ASIA
AFRICA
SOUTH AMERICA
AUSTRALIA
Refugees
10,000
25,000
50,000
250,000
1,000,000
2,500,000
Countries of asylum with fewer than 5,000 refugees are not represented
1 January 1990

Rights of older persons backed by Economic and Social Council

Acts on human rights, women, drugs, other social issues

Older persons have the right to make decisions about their care and quality of life, and should be able to reside at home as long as possible and remain integrated in society, according to a draft set of Principles for Older Persons, recommended for adoption by the General Assembly.

In a resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1991 (13-31 May and 17-21 June, New York), Governments will be asked to incorporate the Principles to their national programmes. The Principles are based on the International Plan of Action on Ageing, adopted by the World Assembly on Ageing convened by the UN in Vienna in 1982.

The Council adopted 109 texts—49 resolutions and 60 decisions—at the session. Many had been recommended by its subsidiary bodies, including the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Among its actions, the Council called on all Governments and organizations to maintain sanctions against South Africa until the total dismantlement of the apartheid system. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 36 to 16, with no abstentions.

All parties engaged in negotiations for a post-apartheid society in South Africa were urged to ensure that the principle of equality between women and men was incorporated in all laws and institutions.

UN Photo 148375/ Isaac

Outgoing Economic and Social Council President Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan of India congratulates newly-elected 1991 President Hocine Djoudi of Algeria, at the opening of the Council's organizational session on 30 January. The 54-member body decided to take up the emergency situation in Somalia and the economic, social and environmental consequences of the Iraq-Kuwait situation, at its first (13-31 May, New York) and second (3-26 July, Geneva) sessions.

UN Photo 177380/E Debebe

By a separate text, the Council reaffirmed the importance of achieving the objectives of the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and asked the South African Government to exercise its responsibility to end violence in that country.

In other human rights action, it decided to submit to the Assembly a draft body of principles for the protection of persons with mental illness and for the improvement of mental health care.

By 19 votes to 11, with 23 abstentions, it asked for a Special Representative on the situation of human rights in Cuba. Rafael Rivas Posada, a Colombian diplomat, was subsequently named to the post to "maintain direct contact with the Government and citizens of Cuba" on human rights issues.

The Council also endorsed the appointment of Fatma Zohra Ksentini as Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment. It asked for the appointment of special rapporteurs on human rights violations in occupied Kuwait and on human rights violations by the Government of Iraq, and of an independent expert to examine developments in the human rights situation in Haiti.

Protection of children

The Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography was urged to continue his work.

Prominent among Council resolutions on women's issues was one urging strengthened legislation against violence in all forms inflicted on women. A framework for an international instrument explicitly addressing this issue should be developed, the Council stated.

A text on Palestinian women reaffirmed the need for basic improvement of their living conditions, their advancement, full equality and self-reliance.

All 12 resolutions recommended by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs were adopted without a vote. The Commission was enlarged from 40 to 53 members *(see story on page 60)*.

The Council endorsed preparation of a study on the right to a fair trial and a preliminary report on formulation of an international standard, similar to a model code, on basic guarantees necessary for a fair trial.

It also approved the preparation of a report on strengthening the independence of the judiciary and the protection of practising lawyers.

Trust fund on slavery

The Assembly was asked to set up a UN voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery, to be financed by voluntary contributions. The fund would aid non-governmental organizations dealing with that problem and individuals whose human rights had been "severely violated" as a result of contemporary forms of slavery.

A voluntary trust fund for the International Year of the Family (1994) was also urged.

Guidelines for the establishment and development of national coordinating committees on disability were to be distributed in official UN languages and in Braille.

Preparation of a draft world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond was to be undertaken.

Continued work to improve the situation of indigenous populations was authorized.

Assembly wants a streamlined Council by 1992

The Economic and Social Council will have a new and streamlined work programme starting in 1992. The Council will also hold one substantive annual session instead of two; a four-day ministerial meeting will open each session.

At its resumed forty-fifth session, the General Assembly on 13 May asked the Council to hammer out a leaner annual agenda at an organizational session to be held in February 1992.

Resolution 45/264 was adopted by consensus. The draft was originally sponsored by Fiji, whose representative Winston Thompson chaired several informal consultations.

Mr. Thompson told the Assembly that the draft resulted from "weeks of arduous work". The final text drew heavily on a "Group of 77" developing countries proposal *(A/45/991)*, he explained, but also reflected "the combined efforts of a wide spectrum of Member States", citing proposals by the European Community *(A/45/999)* and the Nordic countries *(A/45/1001)*, and informal papers submitted by Japan and Australia.

The Assembly also had before it a report by the Secretary-General *(A/45/714)*.

Starting in 1992, the Council's main or substantive session will convene for four to five weeks between May and July, alternating each year between New York and Geneva.

The session will be organized in four consecutive segments: high-level policy making with ministerial participation, coordination, operational activities, and committee work.

The traditional "general debate"—the open-ended, often meandering speech-making at the beginning of each session—will be abolished. Instead, the ministers and agency heads attending the "high-level segment" will engage in a tightly-focused discussion on one or more major economic and/or social policy issues. They are to debate issues in an "integrated and interdisciplinary" manner.

Up to eight days will be devoted to discussions on system-wide coordination and operational activities.

The remainder of the session will be devoted to work on specific economic and social issues in two separate committees meeting simultaneously. Reports from Council subsidiary bodies will be reviewed and decisions taken. Committee discussions will be specific and "decision-oriented", and will not involve a general debate, the Assembly stressed.

UN Photo

Restructuring measures

The restructuring measures are part of a broad reform programme to revitalize the economic and social work of the UN, a subject the Assembly will continue to consider later this year at its forty-sixth session.

Reform of Council subsidiary organs will be highlighted then. The Council's composition and how to complement its work with that of the Assembly will be dealt with at its forty-seventh session.

In the meantime, the UN Secretary-General has been asked to streamline Secretariat operations in the economic and social fields over the next two years. In a 23-page report *(A/45/714)* to the Assembly, the Secretary-General traced how the current structure and functions grew and expanded, and why previous restructuring efforts failed. The report also summarized the various restructuring ideas now being debated.

And the debate continues . . .

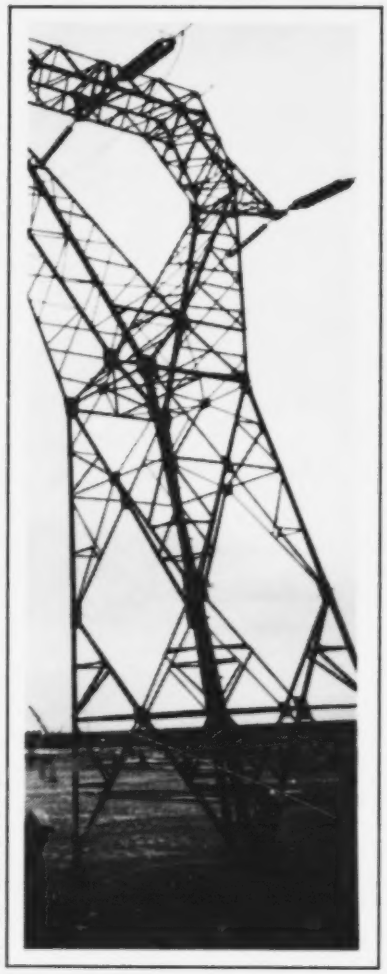
Some of the ideas put forward in various position papers considered by the Assembly found their way to the adopted resolution. Others will continue to feed the debate on restructuring, which will be taken up in the Assembly later this year. Some highlights follow:

Nordic Countries: In their joint discussion paper *(A/45/1001)*, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden suggest that in specific cases the General Assembly may authorize the Economic and Social Council to make final decisions on reports from subsidiary bodies. They also advise that the Council concentrate on one or two major issues per year.

Frequently, the Nordic countries note, the "same United Nations delegates participate in all bodies dealing with the same issues feeding few new ideas into the deliberative process". To put an end to that, they suggest that policy discussions and political debates be limited to the Council, with the subsidiary bodies playing a more technical or expert role.

They target four Council subsidiary bodies in particular for merger or "expertization": the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy; the High-level Committee on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries; the Committee on Natural Resources; and the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development.

With regard to the Assembly's Second (Economic and Financial) and Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committees, the Nordic countries want to replace, whenever possible, the present system of resolutions with a chairman's summary and, to simplify their agendas, remove items which are no longer useful. They also ask for a more efficient division of labour between those Committees and the Council.



UN Photo 133514/Bill Graham

European Community: The twelve member States of the European Community (EC) want the "merging, abolition, modification or 'expertization' of some subsidiary bodies", among them the four mentioned by the Nordic group. They also want to look into mandate overlaps, citing in particular those of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development, and the UN Environment Programme in the field of transfer of technology, foreign investment and trade questions.

Some General Assembly resolutions should be replaced by Chairman's summaries, the Twelve suggest. The Assembly's social and economic agendas "need to be made leaner and more topical". Items should be discontinued on the basis of "obsolescence, duplication and/or inactive debates". The way the Assembly deals with the environment should be reorganized, perhaps by creating a separate environmental working group within the Second Committee, the EC members state.

Group of 77: While many of their suggestions are reflected in the adopted resolution, their call for "readjustment" in 1992 of the current Council membership "in order to ensure equitable geographical representation" was not taken up. Instead, the resolution asks for "a review of the composition" of the Council at a resumed forty-seventh Assembly session, "with due regard to equitable geographical representation and other relevant factors".

The Group wants "transparency and openness" strengthened in UN social and economic work. Restructuring and revitalization, it stresses, "should enhance the democratic norm, which underpins the decision-making process of the UN"—hence their call for an enlargement of Council membership along "geographically-equitable" lines.

'Rearranging the wagons'

Narcotics Commission strongly backs integrated drug control programme

Tribute paid to assassinated Colombian minister

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs had barely started its thirty-fourth session in Vienna when news of the murder of Colombia's former Minister of Justice Enrique Low Murtra by drug traffickers on 30 April reached the meeting.

After a minute of silence in memory of Mr. Low Murtra, whose assassination was strongly condemned, the Commission went back to work. It was a fitting tribute to the slain Minister, who four years ago had told the Commission about his country's and his personal commitment to wipe out the drug scourge.

The 40-member Commission strongly backed the new UN International Drug Control Programme created by the General Assembly in 1990. Ways to help the Programme take off and enhance the Commission's function as the main UN policy-making body on drugs were two major issues dealt with at the session which was held from 29 April to 9 May.

The Programme will integrate, under a single leadership, the three existing UN anti-drug units—the Division of Narcotic Drugs, the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), and the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC).

"I have to rearrange the order of the wagons while the train is running", the Programme's Executive Director, Giorgio Giacomelli, told the Commission. Reorganization was scheduled to be completed by July 1991, he said. The high-profile Programme would be "more than the mere sum of the parts", with its chief reporting directly to the Secretary-General.

A five-year plan

The Commission asked the Executive Director to draw a five-year plan to implement the Global Programme of Action adopted at the 1990 General Assembly's special session on international cooperation against narcotic drugs.

Priority was to be given to prevention and reduction of drug abuse; treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug addicts; suppression of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; control of production and supply of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; measures against drug money and against the diversion of arms and explosives; and strengthening of judicial and legal systems.

The Drug Control Programme has also been asked to promote regional drug law enforcement training strategies and an inventory of regional and subregional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations engaged in the field of drug abuse to improve coordination and eliminate duplication of efforts.

The Commission recommended that its membership be increased to 53.

Other action

- Governments which have chosen to make available sterile syringes and needles would be urged to do so under close monitoring to reduce the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.
- Source, transit and receiving States should take measures to determine the legitimacy of chemical shipments. Suspicious shipments should be investigated and action taken to prohibit diversion into illicit traffic.
- The problem of excess stocks of opiate raw materials held by traditional supplier countries should be solved rapidly. The World Health Organization should develop guidelines on the rational use of opiates for medical purposes.
- National drug intelligence units should be set up.
- Regional drug law enforcement countermeasures should be taken in the Near and Middle East, and a ministerial meeting called.
- Governments should pass laws to control and monitor precursors and chemicals used in the production of cocaine, heroin and other clandestinely produced drugs.
- National strategies for drug demand reduction should be given at least the same priority as those to combat illicit drug traffic.

Drug violence escalating

Stronger international response to drug problem needed, UN Board states

Drug-related violence is escalating around the world, threatening political institutions and economies, warned the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in its annual report for 1990.

The overall situation worldwide remained grave, INCB President Betty Gough told the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on 3 May, as she presented the report. The danger was all the more lethal because of the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections through intravenous drug abuse and the increasing number of children born to abuser mothers, she said.

Recalling the drug-related murders of presidential candidates in Colombia and Peru in recent years, the Board reported that democratic institutions in both countries have been virtually under siege as a result of the drug problem.

Drug trafficking organizations are well financed and heavily armed and have become more innovative and better organized, the Board reported. Links continue to be forged among drug traffickers, terrorist groups and criminal organizations within countries and regions, as well as internationally.

The Board cited information indicating that during 1990 trafficking organizations in South America and Western Europe might have been using each others' routes in a joint venture to smuggle cocaine to Europe and heroin to North America.

Seizure data show that such linkages were also being established between South-East Asian traffickers and criminal organizations elsewhere. "The current abundant supply of heroin makes this development particularly ominous", the Board stated. The international community must respond to drug traffickers in an even more forceful, comprehensive and innovative manner, the Board said. Action should target all elements of the drug chain, from curbing demand and reinforcing extradition measures to blocking access of traffickers to arms, airplanes and precursor chemicals and promoting and marketing alternative crops.

UN Photo 120551

Meo girl of Thailand in field of poppies, the source of heroin.

Regional reports

The report also reviewed international drug control efforts in 1990 and offered a region-by-region analysis of the situation.

Africa had been used as a heroin transit point from South West Asia to Europe and North America. Cannabis was widely available and cocaine trafficking increased. Millions of psychotropic substance tablets continued to be diverted to Africa, endangering public health. In many cases, consumers obtained them from street markets. The European and Asian manufacturing and exporting countries concerned "bear a large measure of the responsibility for this development", the Board stated.

In *South-East Asia*, illicit opium production remained around the same high levels in the 1989/1990 growing season—some 2,000 tonnes. Heroin trafficking significantly increased across China's southern borders to Macao and Hong Kong. Methamphetamine abuse continued in Japan, where cocaine seizures had surged from 13 kilograms in 1989 to 70 kilograms in the first half of 1990, indicating "an ominous development" there. The bulk of the opiate production in the region continued to emanate from Myanmar. Heroin abuse in Thailand had been compounded by the associated rapid spread of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), thought to cause acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

WHO 14570/P Laurie

In *Oceania*, an influx of South East Asian heroin into Australia did not augur well for demand reduction efforts. Between 90,000 and 130,000 abusers were estimated to be injecting drugs, making it hard to control the spread of HIV infection. New Zealand was being used as a trans-shipment point in drug trafficking.

In *South Asia*, eradication of illicit poppy cultivation was carried out in northeast and southern India, where transit of heroin and cannabis resin from the Near and Middle East to Europe appeared to have slackened. Heroin abuse was on the rise in Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta and Madras. Drug abuse was also on the rise in Bangladesh, with increased heroin and cannabis traffic. There were an estimated 20,000 drug abusers in Nepal and 30,000 to 40,000 in Sri Lanka.

In the *Near and Middle East*, opiates and cannabis resin continued to be seized in large quantities. Opium production in Afghanistan had risen to 580 tonnes in 1989, compared with 120 tonnes in 1976. The Government was coordinating an anti-drug campaign at the highest level. In Iran, some convicted traffickers faced the death penalty. Strict Government policies had led to a five-fold increase in the price of heroin. Nevertheless, opium and heroin continued to be smuggled into the country. Of the estimated 2.5 million drug abusers in Pakistan, more than 1 million were reported to be heroin abusers. A new enforcement unit—the Elite Forces—was set up in 1990 to crack down on major traffickers. Although opium was produced in Turkey, the country was a heroin-traffic point to Europe.

In *Europe*, no significant spread of cocaine "crack" abuse appears to have taken place, although South American cocaine, mostly from Colombia, was being trafficked into the continent in ever increasing quantities. It was felt that the opening up of Central and Eastern European countries could make them more vulnerable to abuse and illicit traffic. In the Soviet Union, for example, the number of drug abusers had almost doubled over the last five years, to an estimated 140,000. Cooperation among European countries to fight drugs had intensified in 1990.

In *North America*, cannabis remained the primary drug of abuse in most of Canada. In the United States, drug abuse continued to be widespread. Authorities saw it as a grave domestic problem and attacking it was a high national priority. Drug-related violence had reached unprecedented levels in many urban centres. Drug abuse was costing the country more than $60 billion a year, six times more than in 1984. Intravenous drug abuse was a major source of new AIDS cases.

In *Latin America*, the current year has been crucial in the fight to suppress drug trafficking. South American Governments vigorously implemented national anti-drug legislation and stepped up regional and international cooperation. Cocaine seizures were more numerous than in any previous year. Major traffickers were captured, jailed and, in some instances, extradited to face trial. Nevertheless, cocaine production increased and coca bush cultivation extended to remote zones of the Amazon.

The *Caribbean's* coastline and numerous islands continue to provide transshipment points for cocaine and cannabis to North America.

Feeding the World

Food and hunger—a priority for 1990s

Food and hunger issues should be given utmost priority in the 1990s—this was the central message delivered by the ministers attending the World Food Council's seventeenth ministerial session in Helsingor, Denmark (5-8 June 1991).

The ministers expressed concern that the medium-term economic situation was not conducive to the developing countries' efforts to fight hunger. Noting the unprecedented support of developed countries to Eastern European reforms, they wanted an effort of similar intensity for the benefit of the world's hungry people.

They wanted the Uruguay Round talks to consider proposals to cushion low-income, food-deficit countries from the expected short-term impact of agricultural trade liberalization, "including proposals for a post-Uruguay Round food aid regime".

The end of agricultural trade protectionism was expected to trigger higher food import bills for those vulnerable countries and losses of preferential markets for exporters of tropical products in the short run but was, according to the ministers, in the long-term interest of all countries as it would contribute to more efficient and stronger economies and help strengthen food security.

More aid for rural Africa

Renewed hope for tens of thousands of Africa's most destitute and vulnerable rural families came when the International Fund for Agricultural Development launched on 31 May the second phase of a special programme to help 20 drought-prone African countries in their struggle against poverty and a deteriorating environment.

The operation was unanimously authorized on 30 May by the Fund's Governing Council as food production shortfalls in Africa due to drought were putting the lives of 30 million people at risk.

Meeting in Rome for its fourteenth annual session (29-30 May), the 144-member Council endorsed a $300 million target for the second phase. All 26 projects in the 20 targeted countries combine increased food production with environmental preservation efforts.

Among the countries that have already announced their contributions are: France ($40 million), Belgium ($18 million), Kuwait ($15 million) and the Netherlands ($10 million).

Seeds for Bangladesh

Struck by a disastrous cyclone and tidal wave in the midst of its winter grain crop in March, Bangladesh is assessing the extent of the damage with the help of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). "Rice fields have been extensively damaged, livestock decimated and the remaining animals are threatened with disease", FAO Director-General Edouard Saouma said on 8 May.

FAO sent a fact-finding mission to that country in May and provided an initial $800,000 emergency aid package, including provision of vegetable seeds for fast-growing species and cattle vaccines.

UNHCR/15023/1985/H Gloaguen

Fishermen who have lost boats and nets will get nylon coil and plywood, as well as some equipment.

Clean food against cholera

To help stem the spread of cholera in Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO has launched a one-year $150,000 project to control food contamination and improve food quality in Peru. Projects in neighbouring Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador, as well as subregional projects for Central America and Panama and the Caribbean countries, are in the pipeline at an estimated cost of up to $1.2 million.

Food products exposed to or containing cholera-contaminated water can cause cholera. The Peruvian project will control contamination of both marine and agricultural products and set up a quality certification system. Upgrading the safety of street foods is another goal of FAO's technical assistance in the area.

WHO vows to eradicate leprosy by year 2000

The World Health Organization (WHO) has committed itself to the eradication of leprosy as a public health problem by the year 2000. Some 1,000 delegates from 166 WHO members States at the forty-fourth World Health Assembly (6-16 May, Geneva) urged increased multi-drug therapy and case-finding activities in the 93 nations where leprosy is endemic.

UN Photo 73077

African children, victims of leprosy, bathing in a lake.

Two thirds of all registered leprosy cases in the world are in Africa. Countries with a significant population of registered leprosy patients include India, Brazil, Nigeria, Myanmar and Indonesia, but the severe social stigma attached to the disease has created a large pool of unreported cases worldwide.

Noting severe cholera epidemics in Peru and other Latin American countries, the Assembly asked for a coordinated global effort to control the disease. Countries were urged to report immediately any cases of cholera. As of 14 June, 1,726 cholera deaths had been reported in Peru.

The Assembly adopted 43 resolutions on issues ranging from prevention of child mortality due to pneumonia and accelerated research and development of children's vaccines to increased efforts against tuberculosis, Guinea worm disease and smoking in enclosed public places and public transport.

In a resolution on the health situation of displaced persons in Iraq and neighbouring countries, the Assembly asked WHO to help affected countries set up "effective epidemiological surveillance of communicable diseses" and to assist them in keeping those diseases under control.

Other issues discussed included the urban health crisis, the crucial role of women in health and development, and the continuing spread of AIDS.

Only through a new "people-oriented" approach can WHO's goal of "Health For All" by the year 2000 and beyond be attained, Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, WHO Director-General, told the Assembly on 7 May. "We must humanize our approach to health development—a process that begins and ends with the people themselves."

To improve health everywhere

The World Health Assembly resolutions spelled out specific action that could be taken to improve health everywhere.

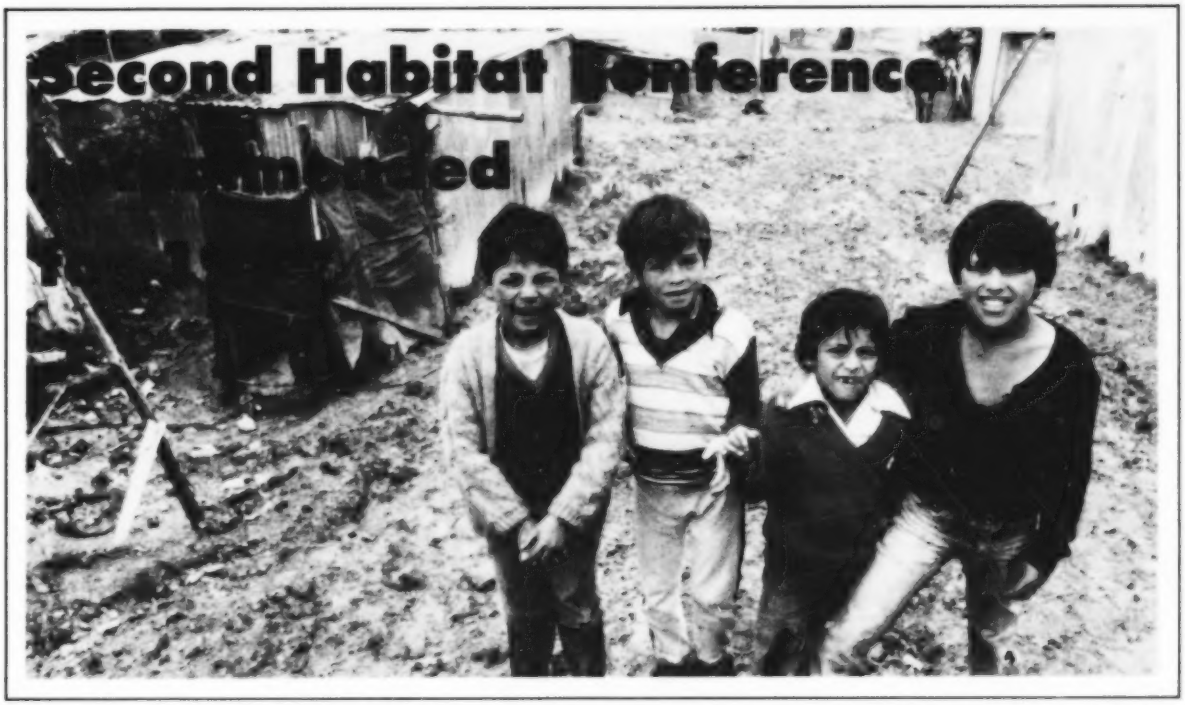
Acute respiratory infections, especially pneumonia, kill 4 million children under the age of five each year, the Assembly stated. It asked for the development of methods of prevention, diagnosis and treatment of pneumonia in children, including antibiotics at an affordable cost.

It also urged the development of new vaccines against bacterial meningitis, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases, viral hepatitis, dengue, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases.

From 1950 to 1990, the world's urban population had more than tripled from 734 million to 2.39 billion. Most increases were in cities of developing countries whose populations increased fivefold since 1950 to 1.5 billion in 1990. Citing these statistics, the Assembly urged member States to prevent excessive urban population growth.

Reproductive health should be promoted, including family planning and safe motherhood. Action to improve female literacy and women's income-generating opportunities should be part of women's health programmes, the Assembly said. WHO was asked to intensify its advocacy role in this area by ensuring that women's health and development goals would be integrated in all its programmes.

In other resolutions adopted, the Assembly endorsed WHO's Guiding Principles on Human Organ Transplantation and asked the Director-General to collaborate with the International Civil Aviation Organization and other agencies to develop guidelines for a smoke-free travel environment. Smoking, it noted, is estimated to have been responsible for some 3 million deaths in 1990.



UN Photo 155044/M. Grant

An action plan to improve housing in the twenty-first century is to be formulated.

The Commission on Human Settlements has recommended the convening, possibly in 1997, of a Human Settlements Conference (Habitat 2) to review the changes that have taken place in the human settlements sector since 1976.

It did so at its thirteenth session, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 29 April to 8 May.

The proposed meeting is to analyse and evaluate the impact of policy shifts in the human settlements area and take a mid-term review of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. A plan of action for the twenty-first century is expected to be formulated at the conference.

The session, inaugurated by Zimbabwean President Robert G. Mugabe, was attended by 473 delegates from 86 countries, 24 at the ministerial level. Representatives of other UN bodies, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations also participated.

Among its decisions was that the UN Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 1 to 12 June 1992, consider human settlements both as a distinct entity, as well as a cross-sectoral issue. A list of human settlements-related topics to guide the formulation of sustainable policies and programmes was detailed. Those topics were: shelter, water supply, sanitation, waste management, energy, transport, and environment-friendly building materials.

In other action, the Commission noted progress made in implementing the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, and recognized the Centre's central role in implementing the Strategy and in the exchange of information on human settlements experiences.

International donors were asked to step up their contribution and assistance, in particular to Habitat, to assist the Strategy's implementation.

The Commission's fourteenth session is set to be held in Nairobi in 1993.

In concluding remarks, Commission Executive Director Arcot Ramachandran said the purpose of the Strategy was to put in place by the year 2000 housing solutions for all the disadvantaged of the world. Observing it was only eight and a half years away, he asked: "Can anybody point to evidence of the great upsurge of energy and initiative which we all know it would take to meet this challenge? On the contrary, we can all see that the shelter situation is in fact worsening and there is a considerable body of opinion to the effect that the decline itself is accelerating."

He called on Governments represented in the Commission to speak up for the human settlements sector, both at the 1992 Environment and Development Conference and in the ongoing exercise on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the UN.

'With commitment and clout'

Work on climate treaty begins

Work on an international treaty to reduce global climate warming began at the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change (19-28 June, Geneva), attended by representatives of 127 States.

Two working groups—on commitments and financing and on legal and institutional mechanisms—began debating major issues, including how to make future climate protection measures compatible with economic growth and the need to further develop local and indigenous technology.

In a message to the session, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director, Mostafa K. Tolba, said that there was increasing scientific evidence of global warming, as well as an urgent need for action. There was a more pressing need for "an effective convention with commitment and clout", he stressed.

The Committee is scheduled to meet again in Nairobi from 9 to 20 September 1991. Its goal is to have a draft convention ready for signing during the UN Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

It was generally accepted at the Committee session that developed countries, which were the source of most greenhouse-gas emissions, should bear a corresponding responsibility at the national and international levels. Measures to be taken in developing countries should be compatible with economic growth.

To understand better the causes and impact of climate change and to devise solutions, it was felt that more international cooperation was needed in the areas of systematic observation, research and information exchange. Many delegations proposed steps to transfer clean and environmentally viable technology to developing countries on preferential terms.

UN Photo 177442/M. Grant

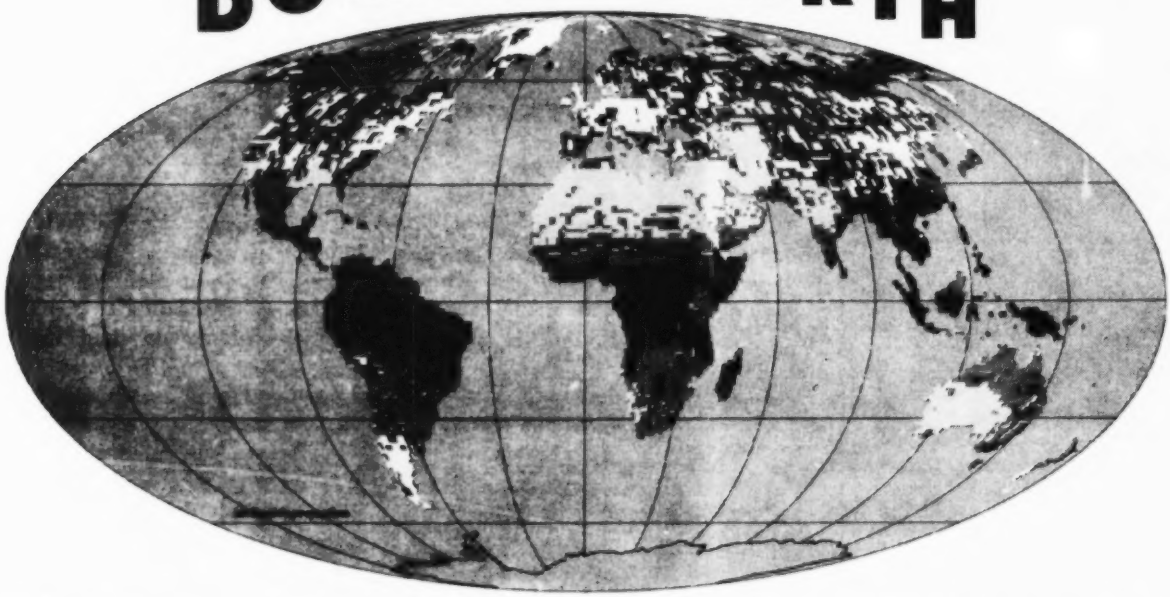
UNEP Executive Director Tolba: Urgent action needed.

Opinions diverged as to how to help developing countries pay for the environmental measures they will commit themselves to implement under the convention. Some said that a special fund should be established; others favoured channelling additional resources through existing financial mechanisms.

Representatives from small-island States expressed concern over their capacity to survive a rise in sea levels resulting from melting polar ice-caps, which many scientists see as a possible consequence of global warming. These tiny countries are already feeling the impact of climate change and require financial assistance to cope with sea-level rise, increased cyclone activity and coral bleaching, it was stated.

Any legal or institutional mechanism created by the convention should respect national sovereignty and not be intrusive or supranational, many participants said. Some sort of non-adversarial review mechanism that did not focus exclusively on emissions would probably be appropriate, it was suggested.

DOWN TO EARTH



In Paraguay, a rain-forest will live

One of the last remaining tracts of undisturbed subtropical humid rainforest in Latin America—a 58,000 hectare parcel of land in Eastern Paraguay—will be turned into a nature preserve, where the indigenous population will be able to continue its traditional hunting and gathering activities.

The land, which could have gone to commercial loggers, was acquired by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and resold to two environmental groups for $2 million, substantially below its $7 million estimated market value.

IFC—the World Bank affiliate that supports private sector projects in developing countries—transferred the land to Nature Conservancy, a United States-based group, and its non-profit Paraguayan partner, Fundación Moisés Bertoni para la Conservación de la Naturaleza. The transfer was strongly supported by the Government of Paraguay.

The land supports one of Paraguay's richest ecosystems, with more than 300 species of birds and populations of river otter, giant nutria and a number of endangered species. Situated near the Mbaracayu Mountains at the Brazilian border, the land has been traditionally inhabited by the nomadic Ache Indian Tribe.

'Garbage busters' get a boost

North Sea "garbage busters" now have a new weapon against people who dump half-eaten burgers, soda cans, beer bottles, fast-food styrofoam boxes and the like from ships cruising that area. A tough amendment to the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, which entered into force on 18 February 1991, absolutely bans the dumping of plastics, glass, metal, dunnage and other refuse from ships everywhere in the North Sea. It also bans food-waste dumping within 12 miles of land.

Along with the Baltic, Black, Red and Mediterranean Seas, the North Sea has now been designated a "Special Area" under the Convention, which is the most important treaty dealing with the health of the oceans. "Special areas" are either landlocked or environmentally sensitive seas requiring stricter garbage dumping controls. Although the dumping of plastics is banned in all oceans, the dumping of other types of garbage is permitted outside "special areas" under certain conditions.

Asia 2000 to combat pollution

Asia 2000, a $335,500 pilot effort to combat urban environmental pollution in some of the largest cities in the world, was launched by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) on 1 April. The money will go initially to grassroots groups in India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It will support neighbourhood groups, especially women's organizations, to provide potable water, set up waste disposal services and educate people about the environment.

UNDP plans to invest an additional $1 million once the pilot

phase is completed and seek $15 million more to extend Asia 2000 to other countries in the region. Six of the world's biggest cities, with populations of 10 million or more, are in Asia.

To protect marine environment

A major strategy to protect and develop the world's seas and coastal areas, which are deteriorating at an alarming pace, will be prepared by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

At its sixteenth session (20-31 May, Nairobi, Kenya), the UNEP Governing Council also approved completion of a strategy to develop and protect coastal areas, in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. The two-week session was attended by top environment officials and ministers from some 100 countries, as well as representatives from the UN, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

UNEP was also asked to explore the possibility of setting up a worldwide "Green Brigade" movement—a network of volunteers for the environment, most of them young people. The idea was originally proposed by UNEP Executive Director Mostafa K. Tolba, who said that when the oil spill off the coast of Kuwait occurred in February 1991, "scores of young people wrote to and telephoned UNEP, asking how they could be of assistance".

Antoine Blanca, Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, was incorrectly identified as the Committee Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change in a caption on p.56 of Issue No.2, June 1991, of the *UN Chronicle*.

Preparing the "Earth Summit"

The traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous people and other local communities should be taken into account by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development when it discusses the sustainable use and development of natural resources.

The Conference, which is being billed as the first "Earth Summit", will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 1 to 12 June 1992.

The recommendation was made by the Conference's Preparatory Committee, chaired by Tommy Koh of Singapore, at its second session (18 March-5 April, Geneva).

The Conference should also consider the viability of those practices in the context of economic growth and study their relevance to the issues of environment and development, the Committee added.

China steps up ozone protection

China announced on 19 June that it would abide by the most stringent international ozone protection standard to date—the amendment to the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, adopted in London in June 1990.

Participants in the third meeting of parties to the Protocol, in Nairobi, were warned that the amended Protocol might have to be tightened further because of indications that the ozone layer was depleting at a higher rate than predicted.

The issue was also discussed at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, held from 17 to 19 June at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi.

Climate change theme of Environment Day

Climate change was the theme of this year's World Environment Day celebrated on 5 June. In a message issued on the Day, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said that "decisive precautionary measures are urgently needed", despite uncertainty as to the rate of global warming.

In a ceremony at UN Headquarters in New York, the Earth Prize was presented to: Ted Turner of Turner Broadcasting and owner of Cable News Network (CNN); James P. Grant, Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund; Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of Mexico; and Gro Harlem Bruntland, Prime Minister of Norway.

The General Assembly Hall and adjacent conference rooms overflowed with fresh faces and hopeful voices, as some 1,500 young people from all over the world attending UNEP's annual Global Youth Forum sought ways to save the Earth.

The two-day Forum featured workshops on conservation, hazardous waste, global warming and video/computer networking. Two dozen student-produced environmental videos were screened and a number of impressive young speakers articulated their vision from the great Assembly podium. The Children's Steel Band kicked off the big closing party at a park across the street from UN Headquarters.

WMO charts course into 21st century

For the first time, scientific information on all climate components—atmosphere, biosphere, cryosphere and oceans—will be centralized in a single worldwide system—the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS).

The decision to set up the new system was a highlight of the Eleventh Congress of the World Meteorological Organization, which met in Geneva from 1 to 24 May to chart the agency's course into the twenty-first century. Some 550 delegates and experts attended.

GCOS will monitor climate and detect change, support climatological applications for national economic development and foster research to improve climate understanding and prediction. It is expected to become a cornerstone of future government decision-making on the environment and sustainable development.

UN Photo 58990

An arid area in Brazil.

Indian Ocean Committee discusses Conference

The 44-member Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, at the first part of its 1991 session (15-19 April, New York), completed the second reading of the draft provisional rules of procedure for the proposed UN Conference on the Indian Ocean, scheduled for Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1992.

Committee Chairman Stanley Kalpage of Sri Lanka was asked to produce a new draft reflecting areas of agreement and disagreement, for consideration at a resumed session set for July.

The General Assembly has stated that a conference is needed to implement the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The Conference has been postponed several times since it was originally scheduled in 1981.

African Ministers tackle economic challenges of 1990s

Ministers at the twenty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers (9 May-13 May, Addis Ababa) agreed that the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990, had little positive impact on the continent's economic performance over that five-year period. For the twelfth year in a row, they noted, the standard of living of the average African had fallen.

Participants proposed that the international community support a form of debt cancellation. Africa did not need more programmes; rather, current programmes should be properly implemented, they stressed.

ECA Executive Secretary Adebayo Adedeji urged the Commission, the Organization of African Unity and the African Development Bank to continue to assist African Governments in meeting the challenges ahead.

The Ministers reviewed possible actions to meet the economic challenges facing Africa in the 1990s and considered how to reverse the socio-economic decline afflicting the continent over the last decade. They proposed a new "international agenda for cooperation" to provide Africa with the resources it needs for economic reform.

Other issues addressed included the relationship of the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action and the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes to economic recovery efforts and regional cooperation.

The Conference also agreed that African countries suffering from the economic repercussion of the Gulf crisis should benefit from the global compensation fund to be established for front-line States.

Antoine Blanca, Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, said in a 9 April meeting that the international community all had to contribute to sustain Africa's growth and development. He added that a study on how to diversify commodities—the main source of earnings for Africa—was well under way.

In its decennial review of the Lagos Plan, the Conference stressed that a big part of the crisis in Africa had been one of development planning. According to a group of experts which met in December 1990 to discuss the Plan, future implementation should include: the integration of African cultural dimensions in development plans and programmes; a greater focus on human resources; the enhancement of popular participation; the need to keep a balance between population and the environment; and the enhancement of sectoral linkages and subregional integration.

Conference Chairman John Chizu, Zambia's Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: "There is no other way out." African countries must come together as an integrated force to promote their own destiny.

The Programme of Action will be the subject of a final review and appraisal at a 10-day session in September in New York.

UN Photo 154078/S Sprague

Worker in Dar-es-Salaam.

Development Report

UNCTAD focuses on technology transfer, trade and shipping

To reduce the North-South technological gap, Governments should increase technology flows to developing countries and facilitate these countries' access to technology, particularly to modern technologies of critical importance for their development. So stated the Committee on Transfer of Technology of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in a resolution unanimously adopted at its eighth session (22-30 April, Geneva).

Such action would promote the industrialization of developing countries, increase their production capacity and accelerate economic growth. Eventually, export earnings of these countries would raise significantly, but liberalization of trade is of no less importance.

Another key component of international trade is the shipping industry, thoroughly discussed at the first Review Conference on the UN Convention on a Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences (21 May-7 June, Geneva). The Conference, sponsored by UNCTAD, reaffirmed the validity of the Code and approved guidelines relating to some aspects of its implementation.

Global outlook: After slowdown, growth

The world economy may be nearing the bottom of the trough, so states the latest edition of the *World Economic Outlook* (May 1991), published by the International Monetary Fund.

After growth of 3.3 per cent in 1989, the global economy slowed to 2.1 per cent in 1990, and it is likely to grow by only 1.2 per cent from 1990 to 1991. According to the study, this was mostly attributable to recession in North America and the United Kingdom, falling output in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as well as the disruptions created by the Gulf war.

However, economic recovery in the United States and some industrial countries, which is expected to begin during the course of this year, and a projected improvement in the performance of developing countries should raise the rate of growth to 2.9 per cent in 1992.

Committee reviews TCDC progress

How effectively developing countries utilize each other's technical capacities, facilities and resources in economic and social development—this was the major issue addressed by the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC).

At its seventh session (28 May-6 June, New York), the Committee adopted 12 decisions covering various aspects of TCDC. Under the terms of one of them, the UN development system was strongly urged to develop, without further delay, the capability to measure in quantitative and financial terms its support for TCDC activities.

UNDP to promote self-reliance

Fulfilling its leading role in multilateral technical cooperation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should continue to do what it does best—promote self-reliance through national capacity-building, stressed the UNDP Governing Council at its thirty-eighth session (3-21 June, New York).

The Council considered a wide range of important issues, notably human development, UNDP senior management structure, support costs successor arrangements, national execution and preparations for the fifth programming cycle.

Eastern European reforms reviewed

The Committee for Development Planning, at a five-day meeting in New York (22-26 April), concluded that, contrary to widely expressed fears, the overall negative effects of economic reforms in Eastern Europe on developing countries in the near future were likely to be negligible in all areas of trade, official aid, private lending and foreign investments.

However, the Committee—composed of development experts who advise the UN in a personal capacity—said that some developing countries, which heavily depended in the past on economic relations with the reforming countries, were feeling an immediate crunch. But, in the long run, once the reforms succeeded and economic growth resumed, Eastern Europe would offer opportunities for trade and investment and become a source of capital and technology.

The Great Communicators

Interpreters: *Life inside the Glass Booth*

By Elsa B. Endrst

UN Photo 121217Y Nagata

In describing the complexities of his demanding, often stressful profession, UN Russian interpreter Pyotr Avaliani said: "Simultaneous interpretation is like driving a car that has a steering wheel but no brakes and no reverse."

He is one of 142 remarkable linguists from 22 nations who interpret multilingual deliberations— meetings which could not take place without them—at UN Headquarters in New York and elsewhere throughout the world.

Seated in individual soundproof glass booths situated inside the meeting rooms, these men and women orally translate speeches being delivered on the floor of the hall at that very moment. It is no easy feat.

The following informal aptitude test has been suggested for this arduous job: Sit by your TV and try to repeat everything an announcer says while he is speaking. After a sentence or two, you may become confused, because you cannot remember what the announcer has just said. But you cannot forget what you yourself have just repeated. Then, pause for a moment and imagine that you would have had to translate all this—immediately—into another language.

States one interpreter: "The basis of simultaneous interpretation is 'remember and forget, remember and forget'."

Monique Corvington, Chief of the UN Interpretation Service, has described the professional skills and personal qualities essential for the sensitive and demanding job: a thorough knowledge of at least three of the UN working languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish); a curious mind; a thirst for knowledge; and the ability to concentrate.

Simultaneous interpretation had its origin at the post Second World War Nazi war crime trials in Nuremberg. Because it saved time and improved the quality of the output, UN officials decided to use simultaneous rather than consecutive interpretation, which had been used at the League of Nations.

In consecutive translation, the speaker stops periodically, so that the interpreter can translate what has just been said.

Challenges, lonely

The professional life of UN interpreters is both challenging and lonely, although they work in teams of two. By its very physical nature, it cuts them off from other UN staff, as well as delegations.

"The actual work is very individual. You perform the service all by yourself", says Ms. Corvington. "Because of the intense concentration required, interpreters work in teams of two in a booth, taking turns at the microphone, usually for 30-minute periods. Hence sometimes, to avoid cutting off a speaker, they may be required to go on much longer."

During the General Assembly's general debate, when many Heads of State speak, one interpreter is assigned to each speaker. Each may go on as long as 35 minutes to one hour.

"If it goes longer than that, you lose concentration and speed and you lose ground. It's like drowning. The tendency is to be very enthusiastic and hang on, to see it through to the end, but your colleague will soon signal that you're beginning to talk a lot of nonsense and it is time to switch over the mike to him", Ms. Corvington observes.

Linguistic gymnastics

In order to brief themselves for their daily "mental linguistic gymnastics", interpreters read UN documents and reports related to their work. A good delivery and a solid understanding of the subject matter at hand is of utmost importance.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether interpreters should maintain a flat, unemotional tone of voice, regardless of what is being said. Arabic interpreter Walid Skaf believes that "you have to put yourself in the shoes of the speaker to a large extent and express his emotions, as well as the message".

Cultural differences also affect an interpreter's work. For example, there is an Arabic expression which literally translates as: "This is a word of truth." Yet the phrase is used to describe things which are not truthful. Chinese delegates are known to enjoy quoting proverbs or sayings, which are often difficult to render into another language. The frequently heard expression "four seas indicate the world" can loosely be interpreted as "universal"; the meaning of "walking dog" can be translated into "stooge" or "government puppet".

Something innocuous

You have to be very careful of using direct language and when in doubt, "say something innocuous until you establish the meaning of the sentence", observes Sylvia Maginnis, Chief of the Spanish Interpretation Section.

Mr. Skaf believes that a good interpreter must also be able to transfer a message coherently, not only into another language, but into another cultural context.

Also, he notes, an interpreter must always be fair. "You have to be able to service everyone, regardless of your own opinions, especially in the political context."

Chinese interpreter Jeffrey Tao sees intellectual curiosity as a major attribute of the profession. "A good interpreter must want to understand and know more about many fields that seem obscure, abstruse and technical, but which, after some exposure, may become extraordinarily interesting", he said.

Language changes, usually dictated by the evolution of words and terms emerging from new fields and subjects covered by the various UN agencies, have most affected the work of interpreters over the years. "All of us speak a little bit of a different language than our predecessors did", says Mr. Avaliani.

"In my case, I must compromise between a good literary Russian and 'UN-ese', as it is called—that is, the specific vocabulary of the UN, understood by all delegates. And sometimes good structure or word order is sacrificed, to be more clearly understood."

And there is the problem sometimes of a speaker's own words. "If the speaker's English is weak, it is difficult to do a good job as an interpreter", he notes.

In the early days of simultaneous interpretation, speakers often made a special effort to be more understandable, to speak a little more clearly or at a reasonable speed. Today that is not always the case.

Some also feel the profession has moved away from the polished literary speeches of great orators. "We're moving into a technological age. The topics of meetings have changed. We're covering such a wide range of subjects these days." Ms. Corvington mused, "Are we becoming too practical?"

Uneasy moments

Now retired, George Li, one of the first UN interpreters, recalled some uneasy moments while translating into Chinese the words of Krishna Menon, the articulate, often provocative Indian leader. "His mind would move quickly from one thought to another, branching off from the main theme. He could go on and on, never to return to his original topic", said Mr. Li.

Abba Eban, Foreign Minister of Israel in the late 1960s and 1970s, he said, was "a brilliant speaker, rich in big elaborate words, who spoke like written English prose". That, said Mr. Li, made it difficult for any interpreter to do him justice.

Strange as it may seem, these "great communicators" generally agree that an inherent part of their profession is a constant dissatisfaction with themselves, "so you keep trying to get better and better", says Chief Corvington with firm conviction. An admirable goal for all at the world Organization.

A Look Back . . . 30 years ago

Dag Hammarskjold:

'Virtuoso of multilateral diplomacy'

UN Photo 40306

Thirty years have passed since the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjold, was killed in a tragic airplane crash in southern Africa. In September 1961, he was on a peace mission to the then troubled nation of the Congo.

For eight years, Dag Hammarskjold, who has been described as a twentieth century Renaissance man skilled in arts and languages and striving for a spiritual goal for most of his life to make the world a better place, was the moving spirit of the UN. By any standard, he was an exceptional international leader.

In part, that can be attributed to Hammarskjold's background and upbringing. His personal qualities, including a deep sense of moral responsibility, obviously played a major role in his becoming a political figure of such dimension.

The Hammarskjold family belonged to Sweden's high noble class and excelled in civil and public service arenas for almost 500 years.

Dag Hammarskjold's father, Hjalmar, served as Prime Minister of Sweden during the First World War. His three brothers were also prominent Swedes: Bo, a diplomat; Ake, a judge of the International Court of Justice; and Sten, a journalist and novelist.

In 1917, the elder Hammarskjold became Provincial Governor in Uppsala. The family lived in a castle, and it was there that Dag spent most of his childhood. This highly spiritual, somewhat solitary environment may have instilled in him a sense of loneliness and separation. It also may have enhanced the spiritual quest which dominated his adult years.

At Uppsala University in the mid-1920s, Dag studied political economy, philosophy, literature and French. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in law after only two years and went on to obtain a Master's degree in political economy in 1930, at the age of 25. His mind was described as "razor sharp" by a fellow classmate.

Mr. Hammarskjold moved on to the University of Stockholm, obtaining a Ph.D. in economics in 1934. He became Secretary of the Swedish National Bank in 1935 and was appointed Under Secretary of Finance in 1936.

From 1941 to 1945, he served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Bank of Sweden. In 1947, he was selected as Under Secretary in Sweden's Foreign Office.

Mr. Hammarskjold launched his international career in the late 1940s. He headed Sweden's delegation to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation and was a delegate to the new Council of Europe. In 1951, Dag Hammarskjold became Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs with Cabinet status.

While serving as Secretary-General of the UN from 1953 to 1961, Hammarskjold proved to be particularly skilled at mastering a given issue or policy.

He placed great importance on relationships with national leaders, on a regular basis conveying his ideas in writing to some respected individuals from whom he could expect substantive feedback.

A master of timing

"His correspondence reveals a mastery of timing, as well as of compliment and criticism, and the line between manipulation and an appeal to personal friendship is often fine", wrote L.S. Trachtenberg, a Hammarskjold scholar.

Among these national leaders and prominent politicians were India's Nehru, Canada's Lester Pearson, Tunisia's Mongi Slim, China's Zhou Enlai, Britain's Anthony Eden and Israel's David Ben-Gurion.

Mr. Hammarskjold's philosophy about the future of the UN was founded on the premise that UN Charter provisions must be given increased political reality. The UN, he believed, must be an adaptable instrument for peace and security, ready to respond to any demands put to it, and to concentrate on preventive rather than corrective action.

In what was to be his final report to the Organization in 1961, Dag Hammarskjold observed that there were two possible developments in the structure of the UN: a static conference machinery or a dynamic instrument of government. This second concept, he noted, "can point to the needs of the present and of the future in a world of ever-closer international interdependence ... and envisages possibilities of inter-governmental action overriding" a philosophy of "sovereign national States in armed competition".

Sensitive to concerns

During his time in office, a huge expansion and shift in UN membership occurred, with many former colonies becoming independent and joining the UN. Mr. Hammarskjold was sensitive to their concerns, advocating more active UN involvement in determining their future, as in the case of the Congo.

No doubt, Dag Hammarskjold was a "virtuoso of multilateral diplomacy", according to former UN Under-Secretary-General Brian Urquhart, another Hammarskjold biographer. Such Hammarskjold innovations as good offices, missions and much of peace-keeping, have now been accepted as standard practices, he noted.

"He inspired confidence and, above all, respect", recalled Mr. Urquhart. He could do so because, before acting, he "went to the roots of a problem and established in his mind the principles on which he would base his actions ... I know of no other political leader who so effectively turned his intellectual gifts to the solution of practical problems".

In today's world, Dag Hammarskjold's vision and legacy are even more important. The international community now seems to have finally started implementing the goals and principles of the UN Charter in dealing with international conflicts and disputes, human rights violations, development problems and natural disasters.

UN Photo

Secretary-General Hammarskjold (second from right) arriving at Congo airport, days before his death.

NEWS ALMANAC

World Court: Finland starts proceedings against Denmark

Citing that the projected construction by Denmark of a "high-level bridge, 65 metres above main sea level" would violate Finland's rights in respect of free passage through the Great Belt—one of the three straits linking the Baltic to the North Sea—as established in the relevant conventions and customary international law, the Republic of Finland on 17 May 1991 filed in the Registry of the International Court of Justice an Application instituting proceedings against the Kingdom of Denmark.

Although Finland recognized that Denmark is fully entitled to take measures to improve its internal and international traffic connections, it contended that the project would impede the passage of vessels such as drill ships and oil rigs or other existing or reasonably foreseeable ships with a height of 65 metres or above "to and from Finnish ports and shipyards".

UNCITRAL reviews model law on international credit transfers

The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), at its twenty-fourth session (10-28 June, Vienna), reviewed the draft Model Law on International Credit Transfers. The Commission also decided to organize a Congress on International Trade Law in the context of its next session to be held from 18 to 22 May 1992.

Experts study Iran war damage

Former Under-Secretary-General Abdulrahim A. Farah headed a team of experts which visited Iran in June to assess the damage inflicted during the conflict between Iran and Iraq and the need for reconstruction efforts in accordance with paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

The UN team, which began its work on 1 June, was to hold extensive meetings with all concerned ministries and visit various affected provinces for on-site inspection of damage.

UN Photo 158260/J. Isaac

Mr. Farah

Human rights bodies meet

Two UN human rights bodies have considered reports from a total of eight nations. Steps taken by India, Panama, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the United Kingdom to implement provisions of the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights were examined by the Human Rights Committee at its forty-first session (25 March-12 April, New York). The Committee against Torture—established under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment—held its sixth session in Geneva from 22 April to 3 May. Its 10 experts examined reports submitted by Algeria, Chile and Panama.

Also, the UN Centre for Human Rights in June organized national training courses in Brasilia, Brazil, and Caracas, Venezuela, covering UN mechanisms in the field of human rights.

UN Photo 177749/J. Isaac

Davi Kopenawa Yanomami *(right)*, an Amazonian Indian chief and recipient of a UN global environmental award, shown here at UN Headquarters on 25 April, meeting with Under-Secretary-General Jan Martensen *(left)* and Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

New transport terminals convention signed

Mexico, the Philippines and Spain were the first States to sign the new Convention on the Liability of Operators of Transport Terminals in International Trade, adopted on 17 April at a UN conference held in Vienna from 2 to 19 April. The 25-article Convention governs liability for loss of and damage to goods involved in international transport while they are in a transport terminal, and for delay by the terminal operator in handing over the goods. It was adopted by a vote of 31 in favour to none against, with 7 abstentions.

Natural resources committee focuses on environment

Sustainable development, environmental concerns related to natural resource exploitation and the responsibility of developed countries to share technology, funds and human resources with developing countries were discussed by the Committee on Natural Resources at its twelfth session (25 March-5 April, New York). During its nine-day biennial session, the 34-member Committee approved eight draft resolutions for consideration by its parent body, the Economic and Social Council. Chairman Francis Eric Aguilar-Hecht of Guatemala on 5 April said that more attention must be paid to sovereignty over resources and the environment.

Private sector involvement sought

The UN Centre for Science and Technology for Development was asked to "actively pursue" private sector involvement in local science and technology capacity-building projects in developing countries. In a resolution adopted at the conclusion of its eleventh session (22 April-2 May, New York), the Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development also asked the Centre to help least developed countries formulate policies to facilitate the transfer of technology.

UN Photo 177746/E. Debebe

Ladislav Kovac, Committee Chairman.

Information Committee adopts recommendations to Assembly

The 78-member Committee on Information has recommended that the General Assembly urge all countries, the UN system as a whole and all others concerned to assure journalists free and effective performance of their professional tasks and condemn resolutely all attacks against them.

The Assembly, which would reaffirm its primary role in elaborating, coordinating and harmonizing UN policies and activities in the field of information, would also call upon the UN system to promote a more comprehensive and realistic image of the activities and potential of the system. These recommendations were among those adopted by consensus on 19 April in two draft resolutions. The first text was entitled "Information in service of humanity" and the second, "United Nations public information policies and activities".

UN Photo

Winners of the 1991 UN Population Award with the Secretary-General.

1991 UN Population Award

The 1991 UN Population Award was presented on 19 June by Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to Julia J. Henderson of the United States and the Centro de Estudios de Población y Paternidad Responsable (CEPAR), an Ecuadorian non-governmental organization.

Ms. Henderson is a prominent population and social development leader long associated with the UN and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Each winner received a diploma, a gold medal and $10,000 at a ceremony held at UN Headquarters. The Award is given annually for outstanding contributions to increasing awareness of population problems and their solutions.

Economic texts adopted at Seoul

Two major documents—the Seoul Declaration on Regional Cooperation and the Seoul Plan of Action for Promoting Industrial Restructuring in Asia and the Pacific—were adopted on 10 April at the forty-seventh session (1-10 April, Seoul) of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Social justice guarantees stressed by ILO

Calls for tripartite action to create better social protection and working conditions for millions of workers, guarantee social justice in the economic restructuring process, and boost incomes and employment in third world agriculture marked the work of the International Labour Conference at its seventy-eighth session (5-25 June, Geneva). The Conference also adopted an International Labour Convention and a supporting recommendation designed to improve working conditions in the rapidly expanding hotels and restaurants sector.

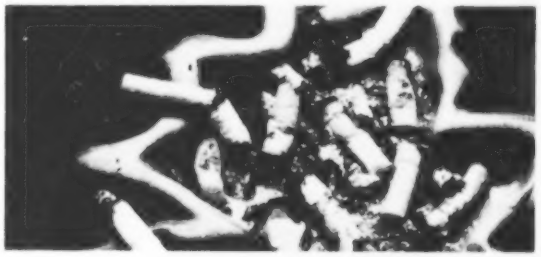
Africa still "highest priority" region for UNICEF

At its two-week annual session (22 April-3 May, New York), the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reiterated that community involvement would remain a major consideration in UNICEF's primary health care efforts in Africa, as set out in the 1987 Bamako Initiative.

The Board approved $12 million for 1991-1992 to support the Children's Vaccine Initiative, launched in cooperation with the World Health Organization.

UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant told the Board that 80 per cent of the world's children had been immunized by the end of 1990.

Tobacco, no; carnations, yes



WHO/1982

On 31 May, World No-Tobacco Day, Kunadacs (pop. 2,000), a tobacco-growing but non-smoking village in Hungary, replaced some of its tobacco plants with carnations. In Kaunas, Lithuania—a member of the European Healthy Cities network—the Mayor and City Councillors kicked off the festivities. In Warsaw, Poland, a charity health fund-raiser and a seminar were held. This year's World No-Tobacco Day, which focused on the right for everyone to breathe smoke-free air and therefore get rid of tobacco smoke in public places and transport, was marked by growing and enthusiastic participation from Eastern Europe, a region of the world traditionally associated with heavy smoking.

Secure financial base for UN peace-keeping operations wanted

The Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations has emphasized the need to ensure a secure and sound financial basis for UN peace-keeping operations, particularly with regard to start-up phases. It also wants studies on the possible applications of high technology to such operations to enhance their efficiency. The Committee's recommendations to the General Assembly were contained in a report adopted following five meetings between 19 April and 30 May in New York.

UNStamp Corner

Heather Henson, daughter of the late Jim Henson who created Sesame Street's world-renowned cast of puppet characters, told a group of children at a UN celebration in New York recently: "My father believed so much in the rights of the child, and his world was dedicated to children everywhere—in whose goodness he believed so much."

Her whimsical illustration of Kermit the Frog is featured on a World Federation of UN Associations cover, accompanying six UN stamps, all designed by children for the UN Postal Administration.

Of her design, 20-year-old Heather says: "The rainbow ribbon stands for the universal appreciation of simple joy—the right to laughter." Because she did not wish to favour any particular nation, she gave the earth "a polar view".

Nicole Delia Legnani and Alissa Duffy, students at the UN International School in New York City, were two of the six children whose artwork was selected for the UN stamps celebrating the "Rights of the Child".

H. Henson

Chronicle BookWatch

Human Development Report 1991

UN Development Programme
Oxford University Press, New York, 1991
202 pp., $15.95. ISBN 0-19-507147-6

Here is a sassy, controversial and hopeful guidebook for international development in the 1990s. It calls for development "woven around people" and not the reverse, for "development of the people, by the people, for the people". Emphasizing the linkage between human development and human freedom, it offers an index of the latter. "Applying a system of measurement to human freedom will always be a precarious exercise", it observes in one of the notable understatements of UN history. The controversy the human freedom index has already generated should not be allowed to obscure the value of this second annual report, with its human development indicators and rich body of data drawn from UN and other sources.

Women and the World Economic Crisis

Jeanne Vickers
Zed Books Ltd., London, 1991
146 pp., £9.95/$15.95. ISBN 0-86232-975-2

Skilfully weaving together an array of analyses, data and case studies, Jeanne Vickers provides a trenchant look at the impact of the debt crisis and adjustment policies on women and how they are responding. Her book auspiciously begins an eight-volume series planned by the Joint UN/NGO Group on Women and Development. Chapters deal with the origins of the world economic crisis, the impact of structural adjustment on women, the policy responses of Governments and international organizations, proposals of NGOs and responses at the grassroots. Case studies from Zambia, Mexico, the Philippines, Ghana and Jamaica offer insights from the field.

Defence Expenditure, Industrial Conversion and Local Employment

Edited by Liba Paukert and Peter Richards
International Labour Office, Geneva, 1991
228 pp., 30 SwF/$24. ISBN 92-2-107287-8

From a 1989 expert meeting comes this set of papers about the impact on employment of industrial conversion from military to civilian production. The experts consider conversion and employment in London, Munich, Rome, the United States, China and the Soviet Union and develop a comparative analysis useful for understanding the problems of industrial reconstruction.

Humanitarianism Under Siege: A Critical Review of Operation Lifeline Sudan

Larry Minear
Bread for the World Institute on Hunger and Development, Washington, D.C., 1991
215 pp., $9.95. ISBN 0-932415-66-0

Seldom are humanitarian relief efforts, even those as significant as Operation Lifeline Sudan I (1989-1990), closely and critically evaluated for public scrutiny. A seven-member research team from Africa and the United States has accomplished this with the support of NGOs, government agencies and the UN. Interviews of over 200 people in the Sudan and elsewhere, as well as situation reports and the field experiences of the researchers, yielded much of the information for the study. Lifeline, founded on the principle of aid to all civilians by means of "corridors of tranquillity" through the war zones, is "a modern humanitarian milestone", Larry Minear concludes. While Lifeline did not end the conflict, it "represents an important stage in the evolution of international humanitarian ethics and of practical strategies for safeguarding the rights of civilians besieged in situations of civil wars". The book brings an important story to a wide audience—no small achievement for a case study.

State of the World 1991 A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society

W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1991
254 pp., $10.95. ISBN 0-393-30733-6

Lester R. Brown, project director for the latest "state-of-the-world" report, eighth in the series produced by the Worldwatch Institute, sees a new world order with a new agenda emerging. "If the physical degradation of the planet becomes the principal preoccupation of the global community", Mr. Brown writes, "then environmental sustainability will become the organizing principle of this new order. The world's agenda will be more ecological than ideological, dominated less by relationships among nations and more by the relationship between nations and nature." Reflecting these ideas are 10 essays which consider energy, waste reduction, urban transportation, forestry, Eastern European and Soviet environmental reconstruction, military-related pollution, overconsumption and the needed redirection of the global economy.

Coming Up. . .

A preview of some important United Nations conferences and events

October-December 1991

New York

24-25 October	Administrative Committee on Coordination, 2nd regular session
29 November	Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People—Special Meeting in Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
November	UN Pledging Conference for Development Activities
	Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA
	Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to the Programme of UNHCR
December	UNDP—Inter-Agency Consultative Meeting
	Disarmament Commission, organizational session

Geneva

1-5 October	UNHCR—Executive Committee, 42nd session
21-25 October	UNCTAD—Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Restrictive Business Practices, 10th session
21 October-8 November	Human Rights Committee, 43rd session
31 October-15 November	ILO—Governing Body and its Committees, 251st session
11-22 November	Committee against Torture, 7th session
25 November-13 December	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 6th session
26 November	Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
2-11 December	UNCTAD—Trade and Development Board, 17th special session, second part
9-13 December	Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
9-20 December	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change, 4th session

Vienna

7-24 October	International Narcotics Control Board, 50th session
18-22 November	UNIDO—General Conference, 4th session
10 December	IAEA—Board of Governors

Other Locations

15 October	UNESCO—General Conference, 26th session, Paris
15-17 October	World Bank/IMF—Annual Meetings of the Board of Governors, Bangkok
October	Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, 32nd session, Rome
5-7 November	FAO—Council, 100th session, Rome
11-28 November	FAO—Conference, 26th session, Rome
12 November-13 December	ICAO—Council, 134th session, Montreal
11-13 December	IFAD—Executive Board, 44th session, Rome
December	UN University—Council, 38th session, Tokyo

Membership of Principal United Nations Organs in 1991

General Assembly

The General Assembly is composed of all 159 United Nations Member States:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, *Argentina, *Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, *Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, *Bolivia, Botswana, *Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, *Byelorussian SSR, Cambodia, Cameroon, *Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, *Chile, *China, *Colombia, Comoros, Congo, *Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, *Cuba, Cyprus, *Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, *Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, *Dominican Republic, *Ecuador, *Egypt, *El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, *Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, *France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, *Greece, Grenada, *Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, *Haiti, *Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, *India, Indonesia, *Iran, *Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, *Lebanon, Lesotho, *Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, *Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, *Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, *Netherlands, *New Zealand, *Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, *Norway, Oman, Pakistan, *Panama, Papua New Guinea, *Paraguay, *Peru, *Philippines, *Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, *Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, *South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, *Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, *Turkey, Uganda, *Ukrainian SSR, *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, *United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, *United States, *Uruguay, Vanuatu, *Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, *Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe

*Founding Member

Security Council

The Security Council has 15 members. The Charter has designated five States as permanent members, and the General Assembly elects 10 other members for two-year terms. The term of office of each non-permanent member of the Council ends on 31 December of the year indicated in parentheses below.

The five permanent members of the Security Council are: China, France, the USSR, the United Kingdom, the United States.

The 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council in 1991 are: Austria (1992), Belgium (1992), Côte d'Ivoire (1991), Cuba (1991), Ecuador (1992), India (1992), Romania (1991), Yemen (1991), Zaire (1991) and Zimbabwe (1992).

Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council has 54 members elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly. The term of office for each member expires on 31 December of the year indicated in parentheses below. In 1991, the Council is composed of the following 54 States:

Algeria (1992), Argentina (1993), Austria (1993), Bahamas (1991), Bahrain (1992), Botswana (1993), Brazil (1991), Bulgaria (1992), Burkina Faso (1992), Cameroon (1991), Canada (1992), Chile (1993), China (1992), Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (1991), Ecuador (1992), Finland (1992), France (1993), Germany (1993), Guinea (1993), Indonesia (1991), Iran (1992), Iraq (1991), Italy (1991), Jamaica (1992), Japan (1993), Jordan (1991), Kenya (1991), Malaysia (1993), Mexico (1992), Morocco (1993), Netherlands (1991), New Zealand (1991), Nicaragua (1991), Niger (1991), Pakistan (1992), Peru (1993), Romania (1992), Rwanda (1992), Somalia (1993), Spain (1993), Sweden (1992), Syrian Arab Republic (1993), Thailand (1991), Togo (1993), Trinidad and Tobago (1993), Tunisia (1991), Turkey (1993), Ukrainian SSR (1991), USSR (1992), United Kingdom (1992), United States (1991), Yugoslavia (1993), Zaire (1992), Zambia (1991).

Trusteeship Council

The Trusteeship Council has five members. One member, the United States, administers the Trust Territory of Palau. The non-administering members—China, France, the USSR, the United Kingdom—are the other four permanent members of the Security Council. China does not participate in the work of the Trusteeship Council.

International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice has 15 members, elected by both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Judges hold nine-year terms, which end on 5 February of the year indicated in parentheses below.

The Judges, listed in their official order of precedence, are:

Sir Robert Yewdall Jennings of the United Kingdom (2000), Shigeru Oda of Japan (1994), Manfred Lachs of Poland (1994), Taslim Olawale Elias of Nigeria (1994), Roberto Ago of Italy (1997), Stephen M. Schwebel of the United States (1997), Mohammed Bedjaoui of Algeria (1997), Ni Zhengyu of China (1994), Jens Evensen of Norway (1994), Nikolai K. Tarassov of the USSR (1997), Gilbert Guillaume of France (2000), Mohamed Shahabuddeen of Guyana (1997), Andrés Aguilar Mawdsley of Venezuela (2000), Christopher G. Weeramantry of Sri Lanka (2000) and Raymond Ranjeva of Madagascar (2000).

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